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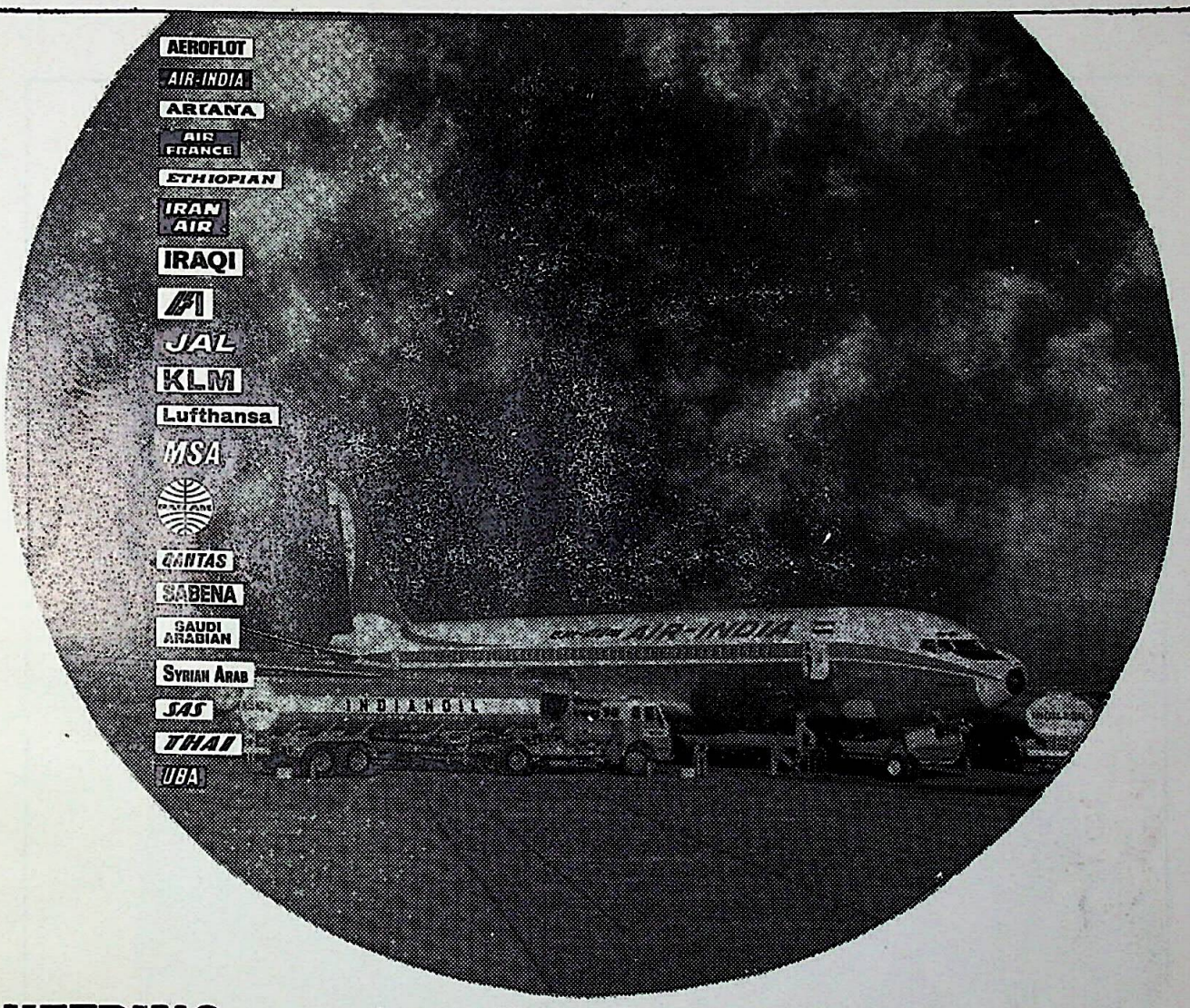

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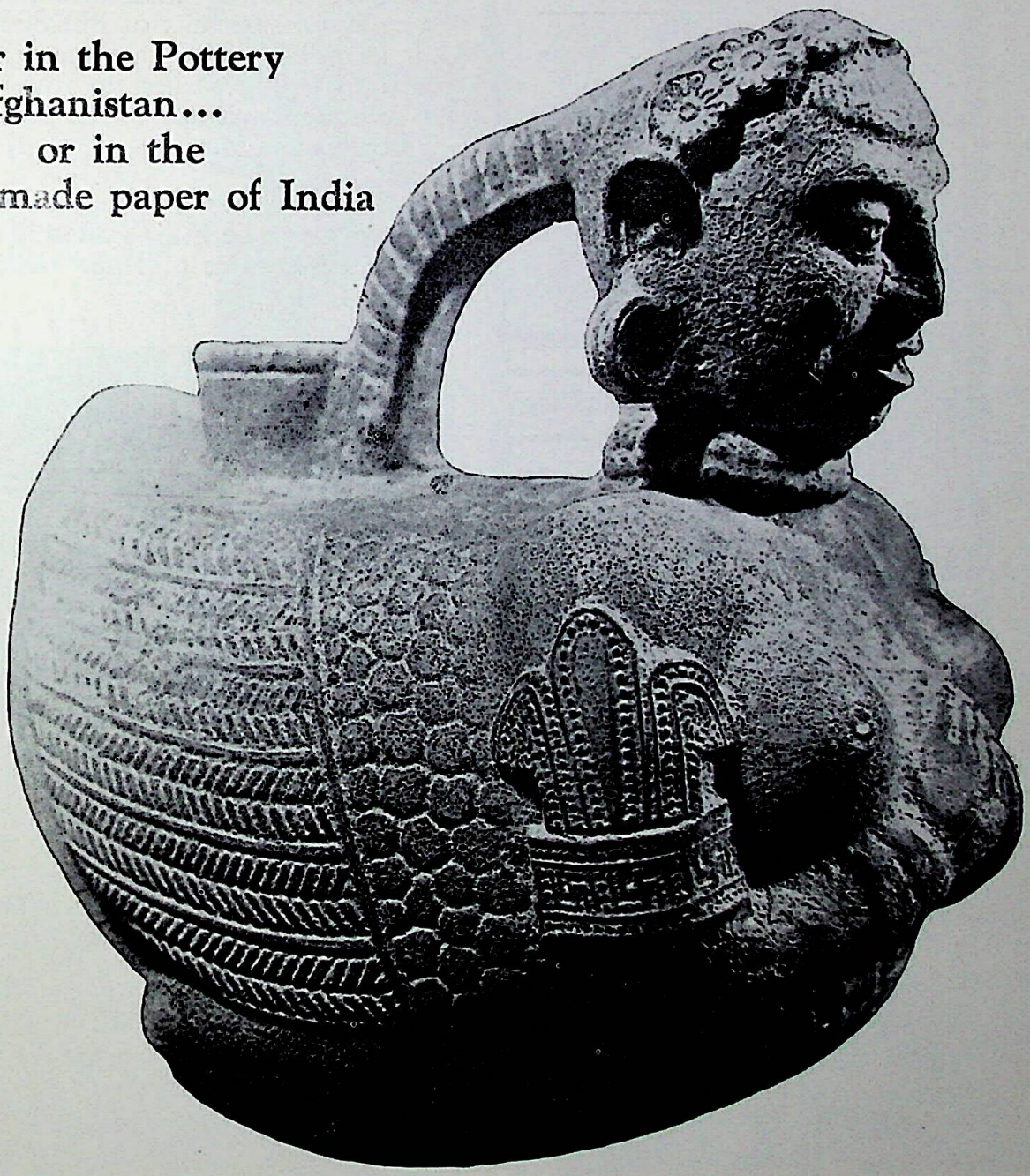

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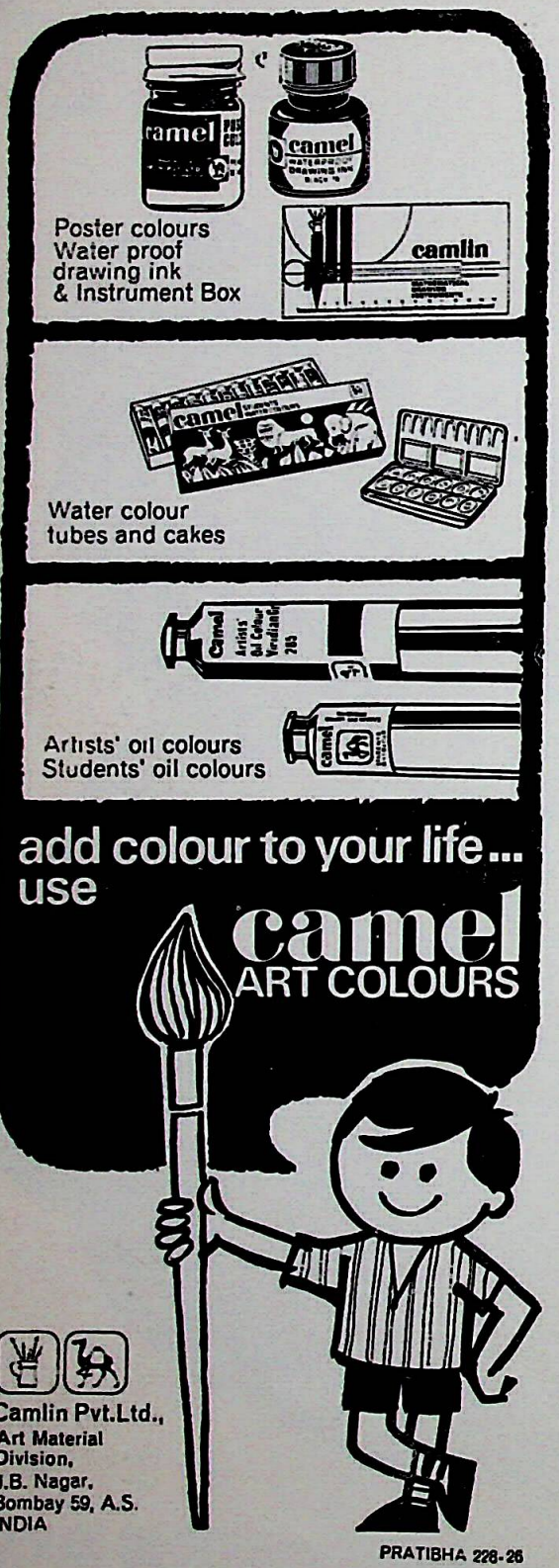

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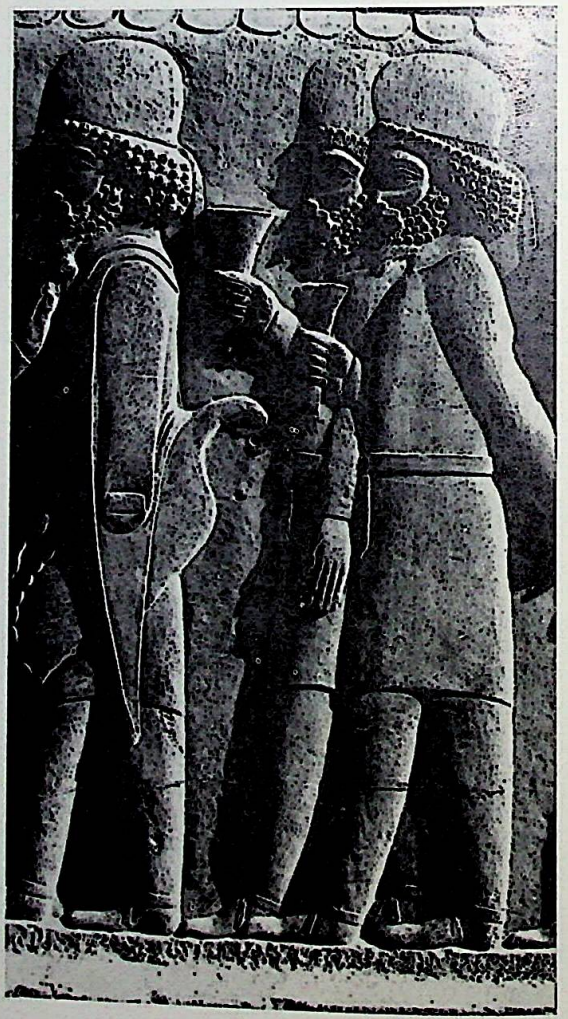

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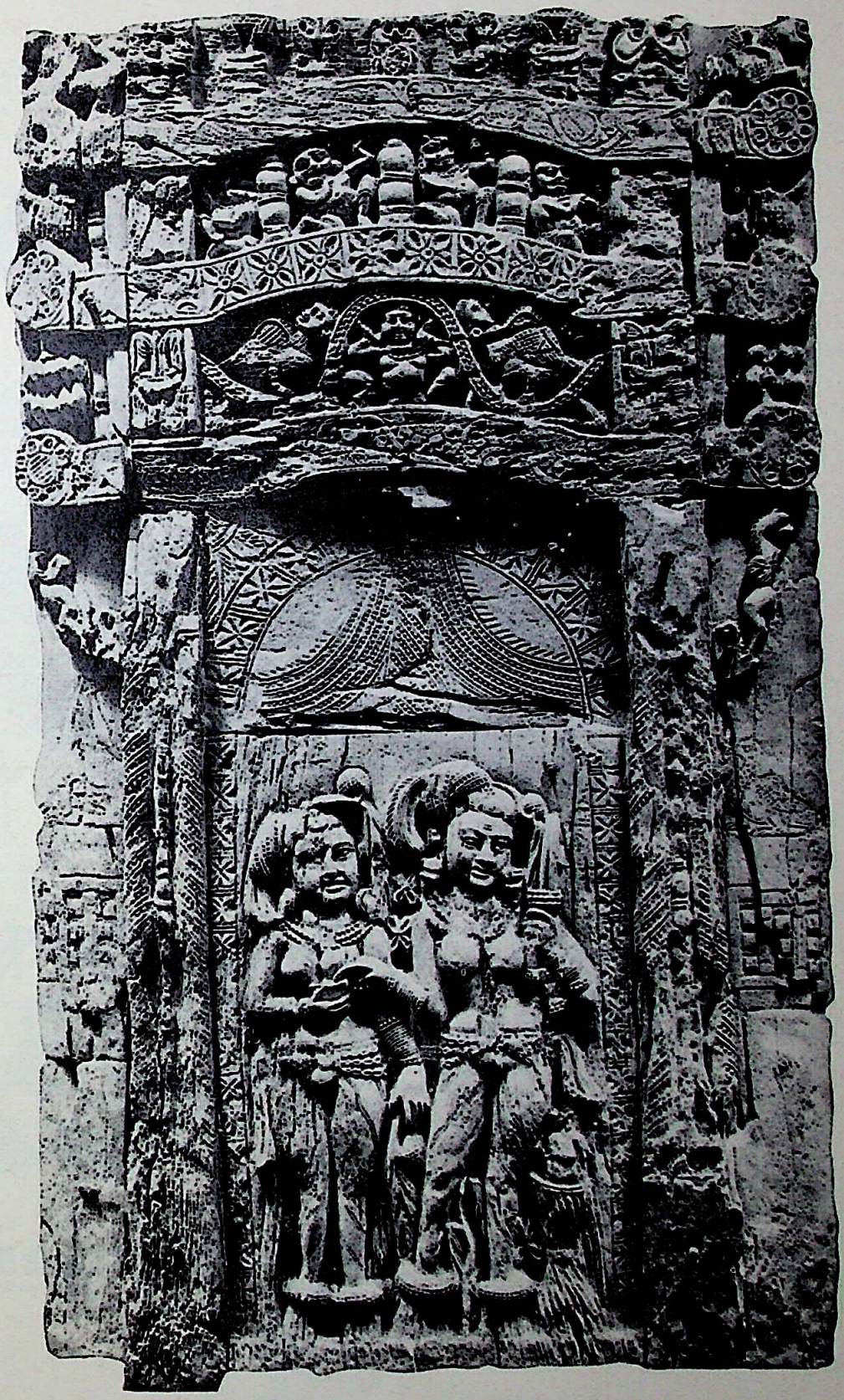

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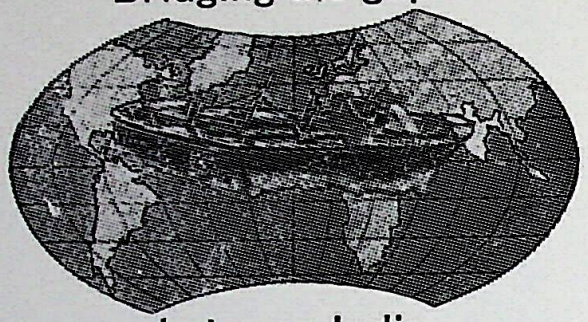

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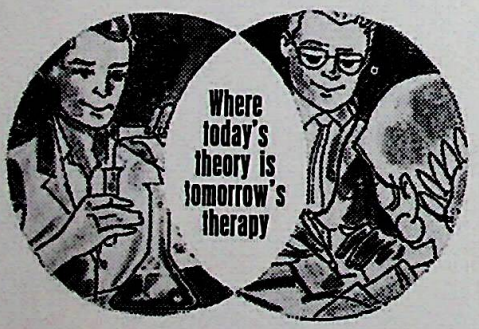

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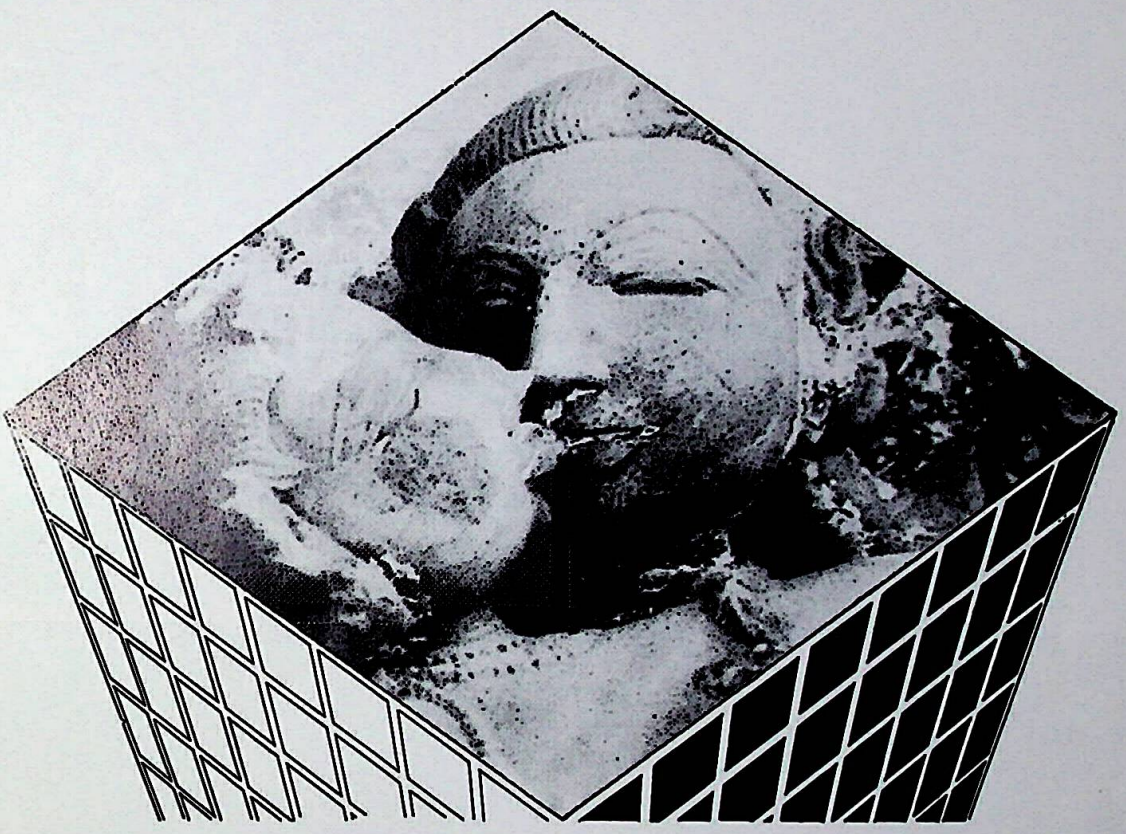

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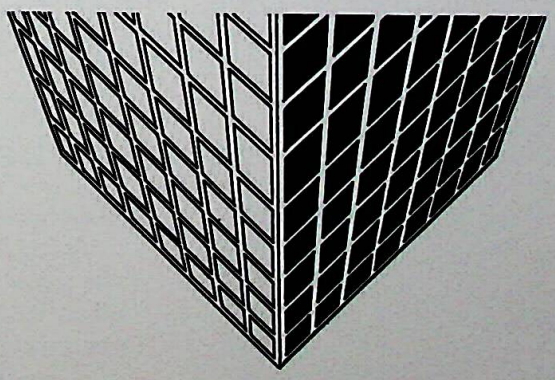

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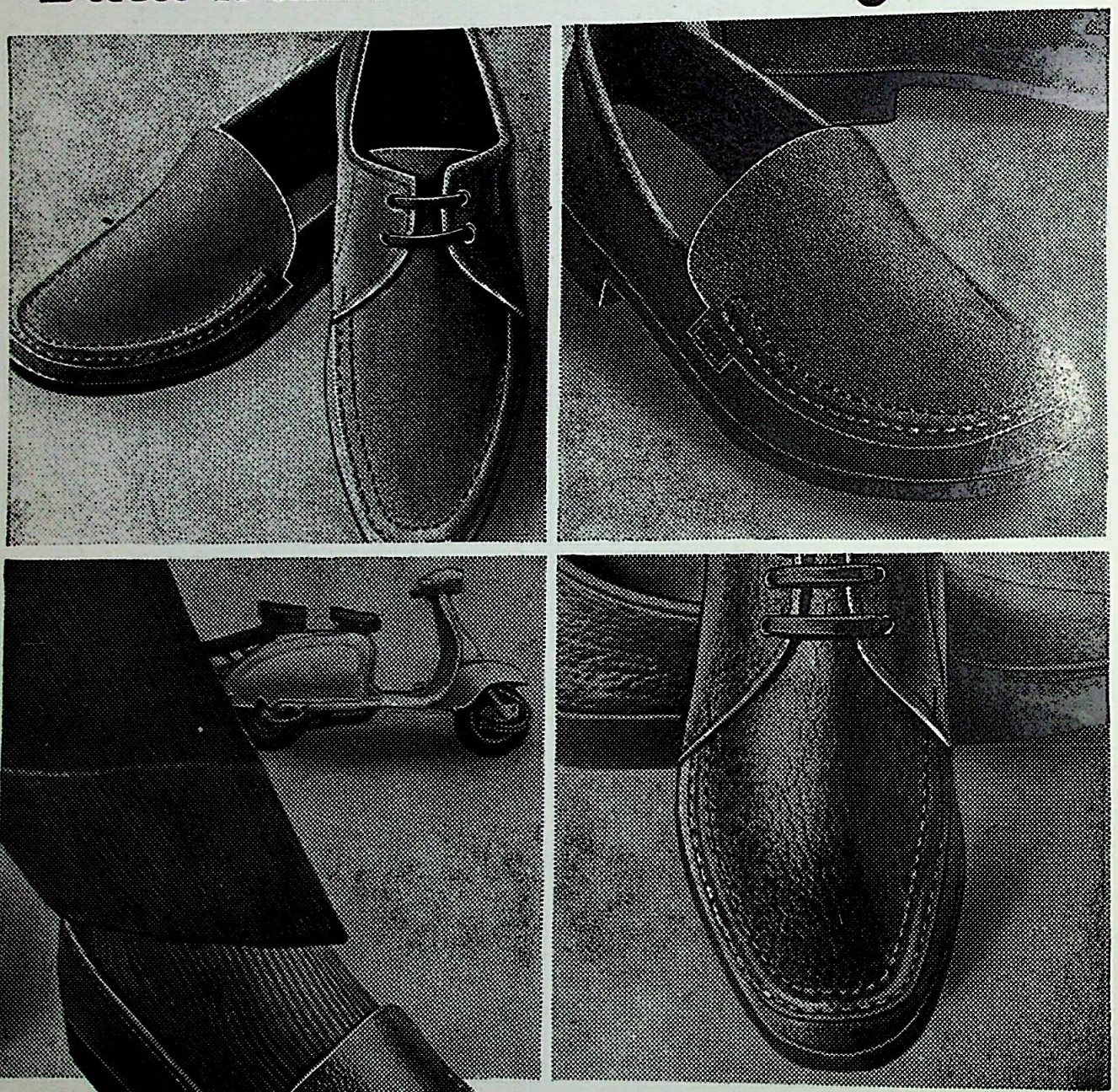

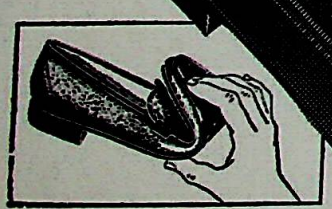

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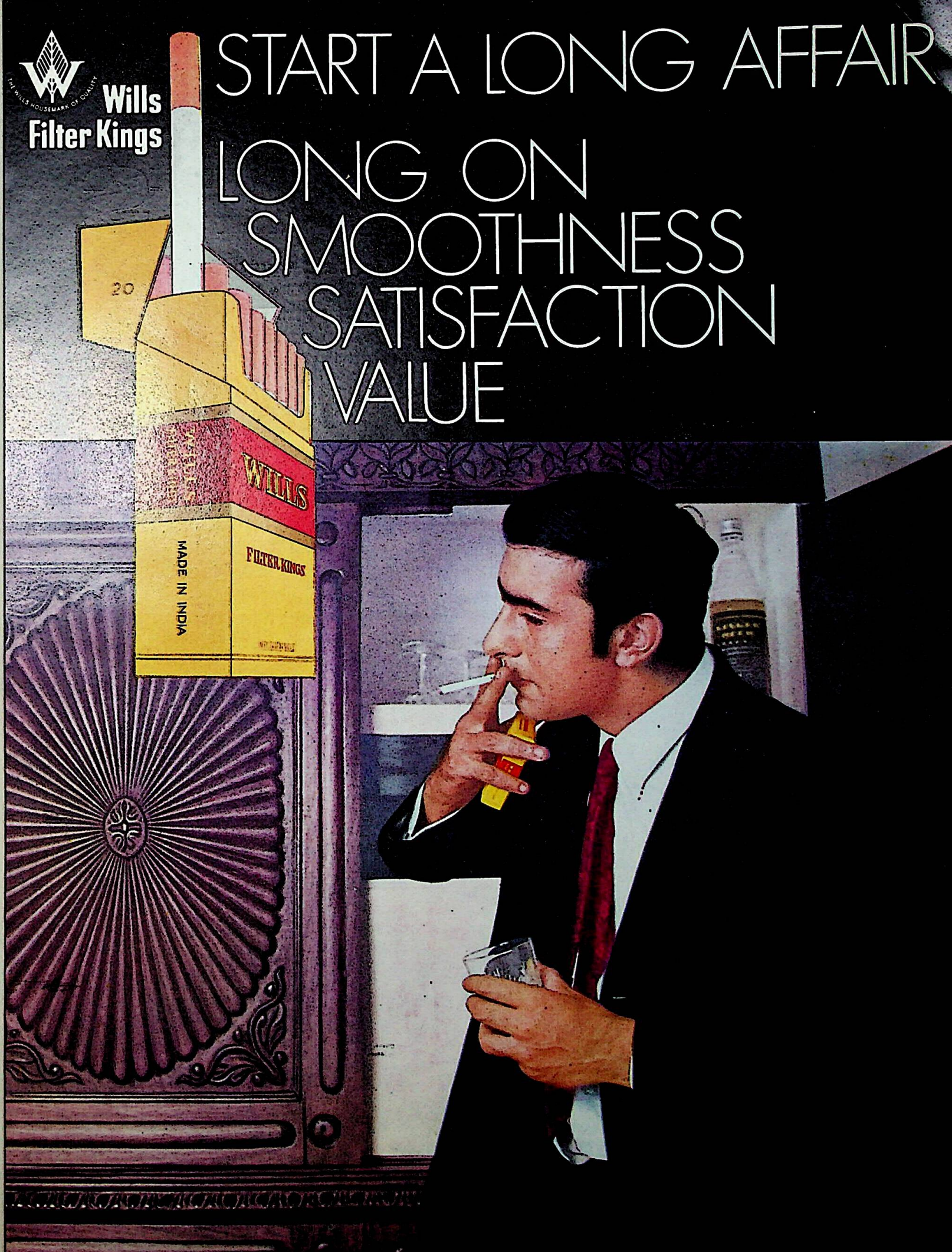
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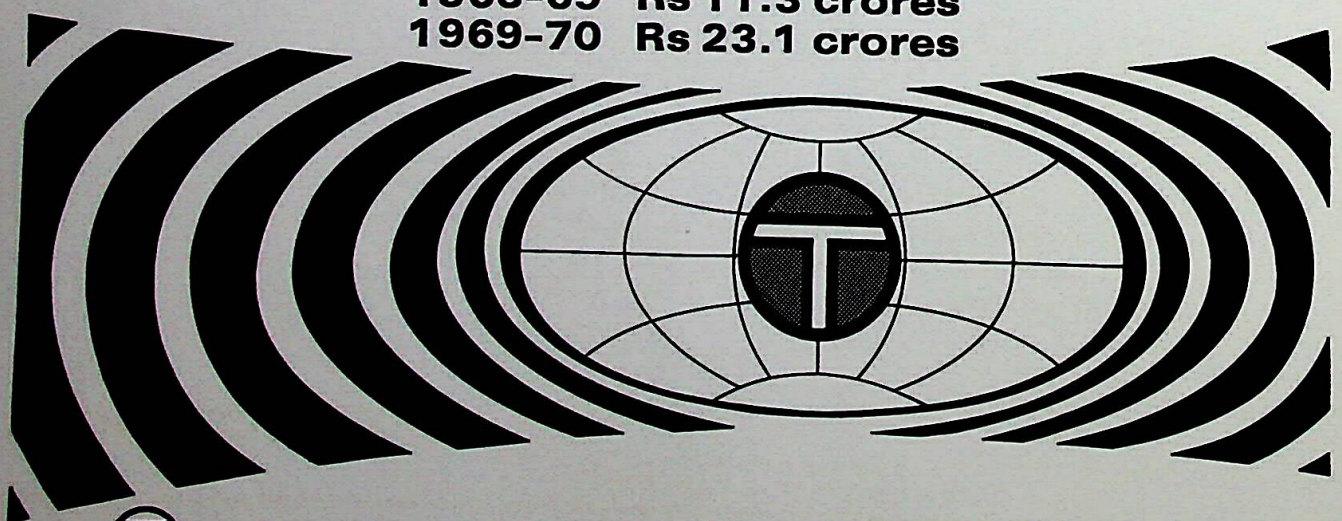

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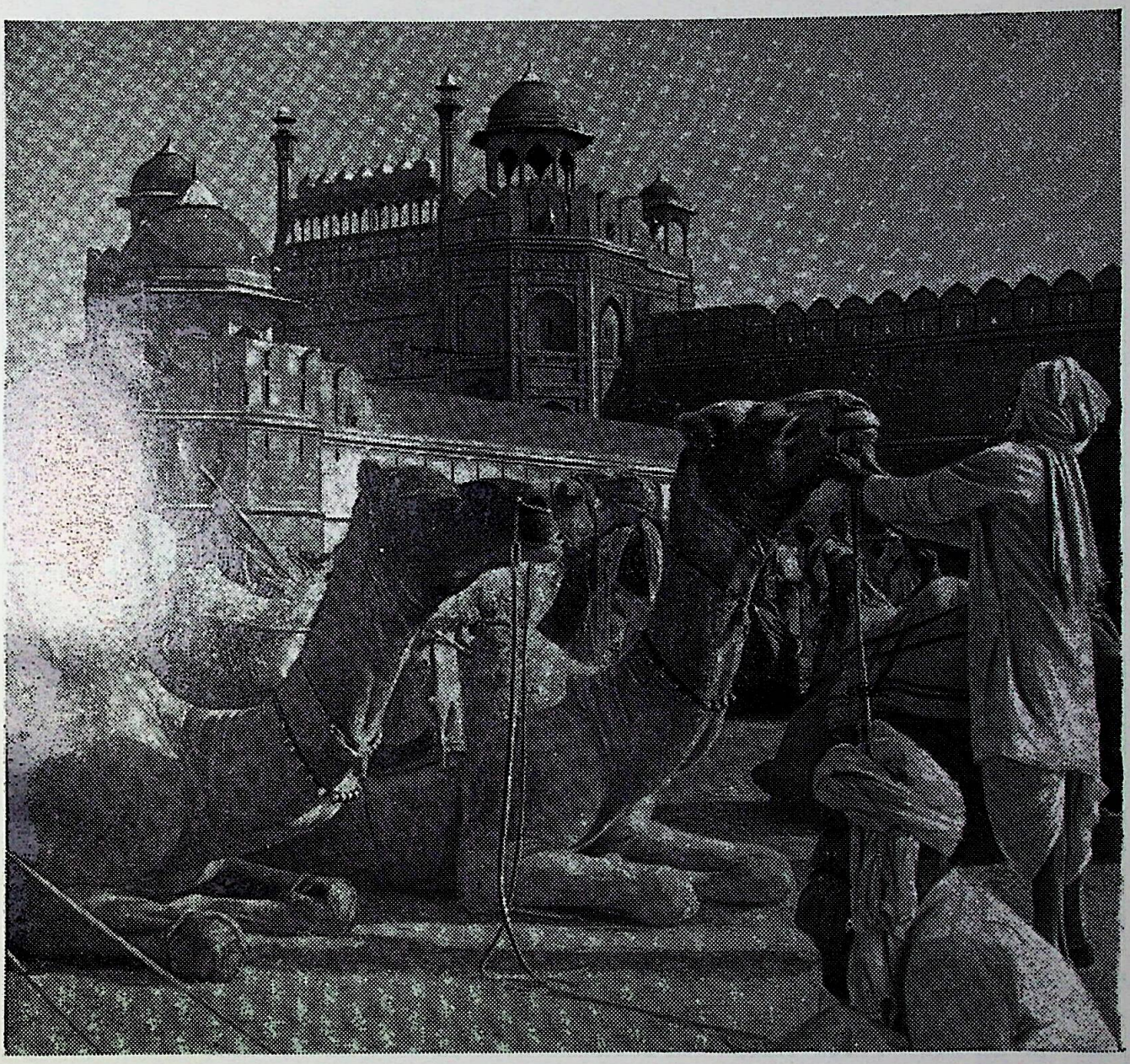

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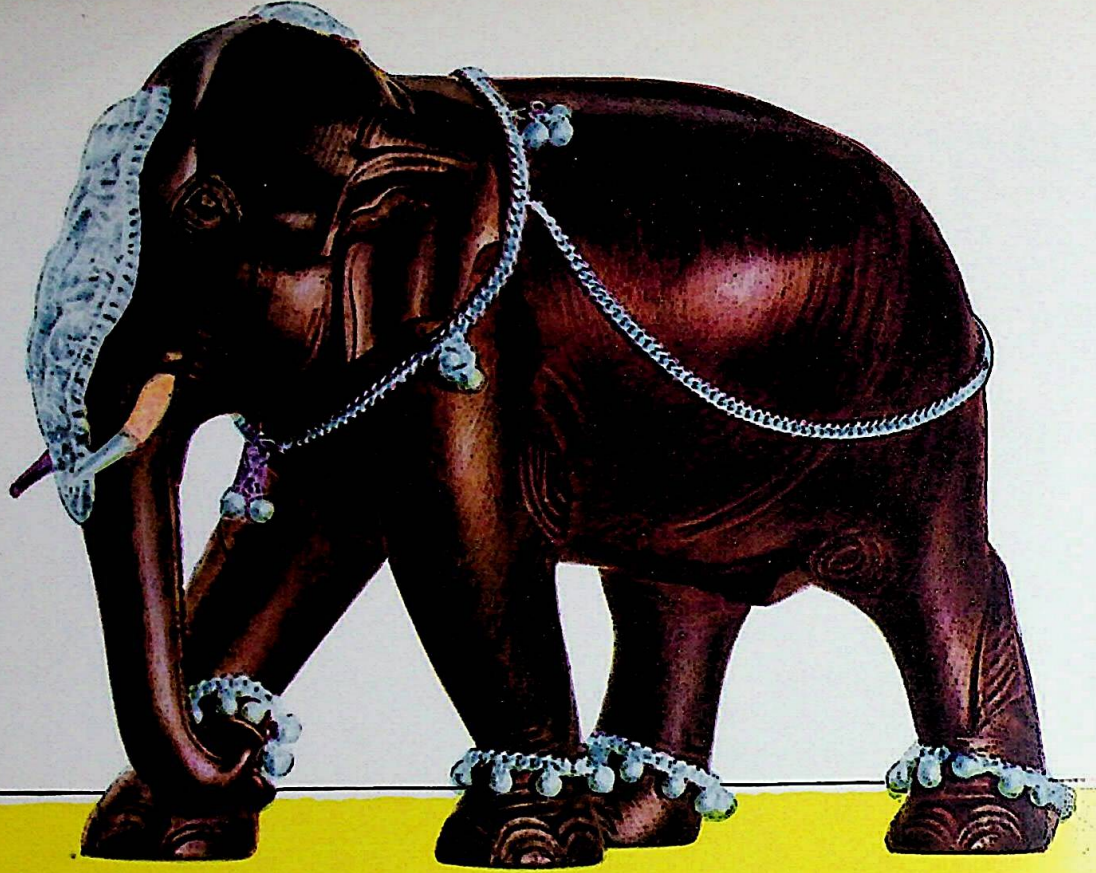

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MARG

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VOLUME XXIV | JUNE 1971 | NUMBER 3

EDITORIAL

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Cover: Enlarged detail of an Ivory balustrade of a bracket. Kabul Museum. Photo: Lance Dane

This offering of MARG to the joint heritage of Afghanistan and India was made possible by the generous collaboration of the Government of His Majesty, the King of Afghanistan and the Government of the Republic of India.

By a remarkable co-incidence, one of the leading photographers, Lance Dane, accompanied MARG research team to Afghanistan, and was privileged to carry out intensive photography of the Begram Ivories in the Kabul Museum. The Curator of this treasure house, generously allowed access to almost all the ivories. Mlle. Jeannine Auboyer, Chief Conservator of the Musee Guimet, not only gave photographs of some of the finest pieces from the collection of the original French explorers, but also wrote an article on 'Private Life in ancient India as seen from the Ivory Sculptures of Begram'. *Prof. J. LeRoy Davidson of U.S.A. had just then put forward a revolutionary interpretation of the dates of the Begram Ivories and willingly wrote a long article to illumine the historical background. C. Sivaramamurti has provided the background of the craftsmanship in India about the time of the turning point from the 1st century B. C. to the 1st century A. D.*

Some of the relevant photos on Indian sculptures have been obtained from the Archaeological Survey of India.

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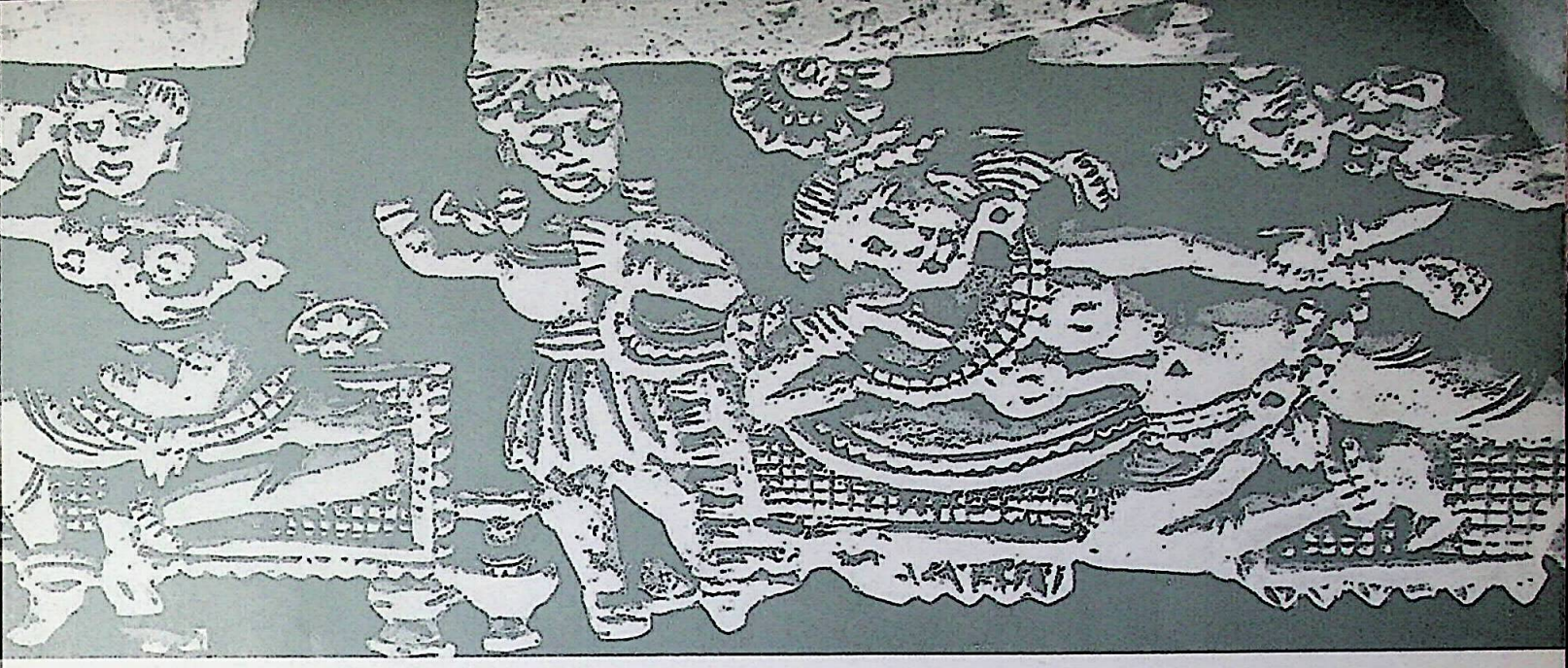
GLIMPSES OF WONDER

There is a legend that the Kushan Emperor, Kaniska, acquired the services of the poet Ashvagosha, after one of his victories in the hinterland of India. This seems plausible, as many of the things Kaniska did during the period of the foundation of the Kushan Empire, were inspired by a certain humility in the face of the culture of the subject peoples whom he brought under his sway. Maybe he had learnt from the example of the Mauryan Emperor, Ashoka, of the 3rd century B.C., because that redoubtable monarch had had the grace to give up war as an instrument of national policy. Perhaps, also, the stories which Kaniska had heard of the Buddha's various acts of mercy and understanding had shown him the superiority of the Indian way of life against his own barbarian inheritance from the Chuch Yih clan of west China. Certainly, whether he absorbed the local cultures completely or not, he seems to have been full of reverence for the essences of the good life, as he saw them being realised by the people, in song and dance and image making. And, being a genius of a very high order, he initiated various processes, even in the midst of his continuous campaigns, which matured towards the end of his life and during the time of his successors. That is why there has been a tendency among Indian scholars to attribute almost all the excellences of the Kushan dynasty to Kaniska alone.

But while it is quite clear that Kaniska patronised various Buddhist monasteries, stupas and his own palaces, we are not quite convinced that all the assemblage of objects of art of the Indian, Greek and Chinese traditions, in the central capital of the Kushan Empire, in Kapisa (now called Begram near Kabul), could have been brought about under Kaniska.

Compelled to consolidate the gains of territory and wealth and influence, through long marches, from western China to Orissa and Gujerat, Kaniska could hardly have had the time to rest long enough and taste the luxuries of the sensuous life. In spite of his brilliant feats of organisation, his generals and nobles could not, under the conditions of feudalism, have been trustworthy enough to be left in charge of the routine work of settlement of cities and towns where the greatest glories, material wealth and high office had accrued from conquest, annexation and subjugation of slaves. Through his own instinctive grasp of the



AND BEAUTY IN IVORY

ultimate pain of existence, which inclined Kaniska to the faith of the Buddha, he seems to have lived a disciplined life, but he did not shun the pleasures of wine and women and wealth. Actually, he seems to have preferred the acquisition of fine horses and wisemen and wonderful craftsmen to the acquisition of holiness.

Thus, the gay, sensual and elegant life shown in the miniature carvings on ivories found in Begram probably inherited by Kaniska from previous rulers, are full of blandishments. There are scenes showing lovely women, indolently going through their elaborate toilets. They do their hair. They massage each other. They look at the mirror. They play with pets. They hide and seek. And they indulge in Bacchanalian festivals with a languorous charm that is the very opposite of the 'authentic' life of meditation which alone the Buddhists were enjoined as against the unauthentic life of hedonistic pleasures.

The dates when these ivories were carved are not known. Scholars are divided even about whether they were chiselled in India and brought to Kapisa, or whether they were engraved near Kabul. We can see the similarities of figuration, the execution of curvacious line and the composition of scenes with the creations in Barhut, Sanchi, Mathura, Amravati and Nagarjunakonda, but the mystery of the origins of these ivories remains.

There is no doubt about the mastery of the chisel. The sureness of touch, which makes every line into a rhythmic pleasure, and the sense of the unity of life of humans and animals and vegetables, infused into the various scenes—surely make these eclectic works the finest and most skilful products of the ivory carver's art of all time.

The glimpses of wonder and beauty in these panels offer to us pleasures, even two thousand or more years later, in a manner that restores meaning to the mysticism of aesthetic delight, which has been the main sustenance of the human spirit throughout time.

CONVERSATION IN KAPISA

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The early morning sun over Kapisa first strikes the snows over the mountains of Qarabagh, Hopian, and Istalif. The shining splendour cools the eyes, because it comes accompanied by a gentle breeze. The earth is mature with the streams which rush away from the torrents of the sub-valleys in the lower ranges of the Hindukush. The almond blossom bursts in the spring. The grapes ripen. And the wheat sways like the waves of the yellow river.

The king and the queen wished to add a new wing to the palace built by the previous Emperors. They had called three master builders, one from the holy land of India; another from the pagan Greek country of the Aegean; and a third from West China. Before the plans were unfolded, the king ordered the servants to serve the grape juice, fermented by him in the cellars according to the formulas which his Roman General had taught him.

The king said:

'There are forty-five different kinds of brews according to my General Zeno—each with a different flavour. I have learnt to prepare seven. One evening, when the new wing of the palace is finished, we shall have a house-warming party and you will taste all the seven.'

The queen came downstairs from the female quarters and added:

'And I shall give you goblets of glass, blown by the miracle workers, who are descended from the families brought from Carthage.'

The Indian ivory carver, Anandadeva said:

'In the Buddha land, the monarchs give cow's milk, or curds beaten into whey, or milk water. Soma rasa was the favourite drink of the Brahmins. They needed it, because the tongue moves easier in argument after partaking of wine. Those who seek salvation drink the breath of *Nirvana*.'

The Chinese carver, Hsien, produced a bowl of jade and said:

'Majesty, if you drink your wines in this cup, you will get deliverance, without austerity.'

The Greek sculptor, Androcles, produced a crystal image of the Goddess Athene and offered it to the queen saying:

The sensuous charm of these females, ostensively lady and maid servant, give the feeling of the elegant women from Amravati medallions. The intricate coiffeur, the decorative jewellery and the soft draperies are redolent of a civilisation in which the court ladies could indulge in prolonged and leisurely toilets. The carving is mobile and instinct with the very breath of life.
Photo by Lance Dane.

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Photo by Lenore Dame.

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The Greek sculptor, Andreclas, produced a crystal image of the Goddess Athene and offered it to the queen saying:

'For those of us, who are in the midstream, images of the gods alone offer sustenance.'

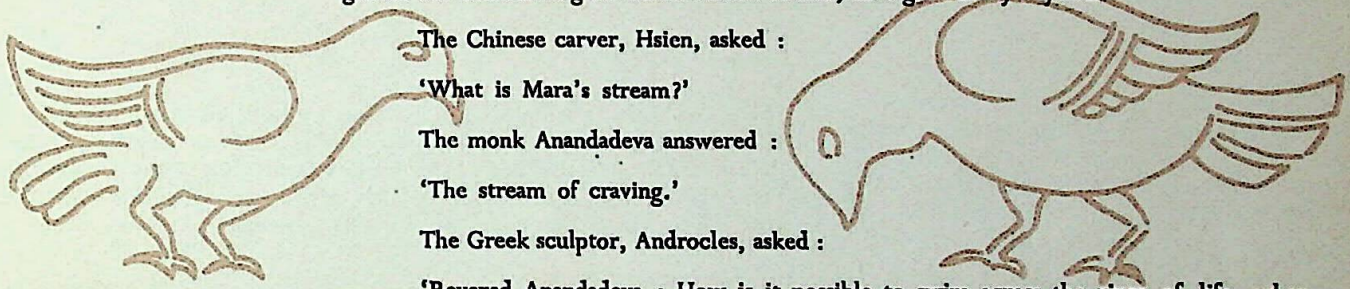
The queen said:

'In Vidisa, where I was born, my father performed great sacrifices and gave gifts of one thousand good cows, with gold pieces tied to their horns. We propose to offer one thousand horses to each of you if the new wing of the palace can be so made as to delight us at the same time as it may remind us, that it is in the midstream.'

Anandadeva said: 'There is always a danger of being swept away by the flood. Our master had enjoined that we should learn to swim across the river.'

And he intoned the exact words of the Master:

' "Monks, like unto those bulls were the sires and leaders of the herd and who, having cut across the stream of the Ganges, went safely beyond, are those monks who are Arihants, the outflows extinguished, who have lived the life, done what was to be done, laid down the burden, attained their own goal, the fetters of becoming utterly extinguished, freed by perfect gnosis. For these having cut across Mara's stream, have gone safely beyond." '



The Chinese carver, Hsien, asked :

'What is Mara's stream?'

The monk Anandadeva answered :

'The stream of craving.'

The Greek sculptor, Androcles, asked :

'Revered Anandadeva : How is it possible to swim across the river of life, when there is danger of death for those who are not trained in swimming ?'

The Chinese, Hsien, added :

'Oh wise Monk, you who are a master of ivory carving, may have learnt to swim. But how can those who are still in the process of becoming of conquering space and ruling men, like our Sire—how can they have a view of the other side?'

The king nodded and turned to Anandadeva.

Anandadeva spoke :

'Revered brothers, in the midstream is *Dukha*. The pain of existence is perennial. Because there is desire. So, the being, which is bound to Samsara, must shun desire, with the *Karma* of right word and right deed. And thus one can go beyond.'

The king said :

'Mara often comes into my dreams and says to me :

' "He who is born delights in sense pleasures." '

The queen said :

'The evil one also comes to me and says :

' "The gifts are given to the few. Take them. Accept the pleasures and forget about death." '

Anandadeva pondered for a while, hung his head down, and tried to muster courage to speak the cruel truth to the queen. Then he whispered :

'Death is inevitable—he that is born has to die. And in the midstream he has to suffer miseries, calamities, bonds. The Buddha taught the dharma for overpassing birth, for getting rid of all suffering—He established the truth.'

The queen assented to the wise man, and said :

'Revered Anandadeva, it is difficult for a woman. You cannot say to her, do not take pleasure in birth.'

The Chinese carver, Hsien, said :

'I have heard the fable of the conch: Once upon a time, a conch blower, taking his conch, came to a border district, and, standing in a village, blew on his conch three times, put it aside and sat down. The people wondered who had made that lovely and charming sound. They asked the conch blower. He told them that it was a conch and that was that lovely and charming sound. They laid the conch on its back and said: "Speak conch, speak." But it gave no sound. The conch blower picked up the conch again, blowed it three times and went away with it. The people then realised : 'So long as the conch is accompanied by man and by exertion and by wind, it makes a sound. But so long as it is accompanied neither by a man nor by exertion, nor by the wind, it makes no sound. In the same way, so long as our body is accompanied by light and heat and consciousness, so long as we walk backwards and forwards, stand still and sit and lie down, see, hear, smell, taste, touch and discern mental states with the mind, so long we are alive even if we are midstream. So long as the body is accompanied neither by life, nor heat, nor consciousness, it can do nothing.'

Anandadeva said :

'This is one kind of truth. But there are other truths. If a feeling is limited to the body, or to the life-principle, one knows that one has a feeling. But one must know why one has a feeling, as also the mental states passion, hatred, and confusion. One must know these mental states as they come from the false view of our body, as the only self, as they come from dependence on rite and custom, as they come from pleasure—one must not always remain a puppet.'

The king intervened :

'Selfconsciousness is not always good for the life of action.'

The Chinese carver, Hsien, said :

'There are two attitudes. And they are contrary. The Indian conjures up the eternal and we others think of the here and the now.'

The queen said :

'Both are important.'

Anandadeva said :

'One must be constantly aware of the contradiction. Those who know the root-cause of desire, and seek the authentic life, become calm, peaceful and attain equilibrium. We are on friendly terms with ourselves and existence.'

The Greek sculptor, Androcles, asked :

'What is a second attitude ?'

Anandadeva answered :

'The second kind of people are like us in the midstream. We struggle to create images and we live in the ecstasy of myth making, shaping, and even destroying. This creative energy is a kind of nobility, coming out of restlessness. But the struggle to make images enables us to live in high tension. And we begin to flow from deep within ourselves. The hand, the heart, and the head, join to create silent areas, with the rhythms of lines. In the flow of our being, we overcome the pain of existence, through the continual transformation of the forms around us. And the vision we bring, connecting one thing with another, incarnating one thing with another, incarnating the breath into these shapes, and communicating their energy to other people, brings us deliverance.'

The Chinese carver, Hsien, said :

'Creation may bring deliverance to the artisan—but what about the spectator ?'

The queen answered :

'The images you create will remind of my desires. The voluptuousness of the pleasures will carry the taint of transience. And the variegated forms will put me in touch with all the incarnations of life. I will see myself as a weeping willow, as a swan floating on the waters, as the she-elephant, as the doe in the forest, as the snake gliding along like the soul in movement, as the fish in the waters pregnant with pearls.'

The king said :

'The happiness of existence is only possible to me as the happiness of seeing appearances.'

The Greek sculptor, Androcles, put in :

'The only way out is, as Plato has said, "in aesthetic contemplation".'

The queen said :

'If by aesthetic contemplation, Plato meant creation of beautiful things, then I agree.'

The king cut in :

'The philosophers always reduce things to a formula, whether they are Indians or Greeks...I find that I am as much body as soul. In fact, I am many other things besides. And I only feel alive, when I am leading an army in battle, settling problems, playing with women in the garden, or building new forts and palaces. The men of learning want me to attain Nirvana. I find that when I am totally involved, I am more than my various selves. I would like you artists to indicate this aliveness in your images.'

The queen nodded assent and said :

'All the images I have seen in Sanchi, Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda, as well as in Barhut and Mathura, seem to show the deeds of men. Women are mostly shown as the pleasure of men. Why cannot the sports of the females alone in the palace be shown? When the king is away on the wars we have a life of our own. We women in the palace invent oils, lotions and perfumes to adorn the body. We have also invented various games to pass the time.'

Anandadeva said :

'I am not averse to showing the vanities of noble women, or the deeds in battle of generals. But the purpose of images is to suggest the vanity of vanities—that is life.'

The king frowned and got up, indicating with his hand the area to be covered in the new wing of the palace. And he said :

'The old structures were here even more than a hundred years before we came on the scene. The craftsmen who built them were mostly Greeks and Romans and Indians. It is true that they had accepted the gospel of the Enlightened One. But they built with hands and not according to any set rules. What I like about Gautama's teaching is that he did not believe in God. He left man free to pursue his own destiny. Space is free, though it is endless and we must occupy as much of it as we can organise, for life. And, in this space, we would like to surround ourselves with the things by which we live. The images should show when a human being, or an animal, or a plant, is alive. The juxtaposition of symbols alone will not do. A swan is graceful as it floats on the water. The idea of grace is not a pattern into which the swan must fit itself, but its movement should indicate flow. The elephant is, I am told, a symbol of the Buddha, who was once incarnated into this noble beast. The priests have not understood that if you show the elephant as a symbol, the image will be dead. But if you show the elephant in the jungle, as in Ajanta in the Saddhanta Jataka story, it may come alive and radiate energy. Similarly, if you show the plants merely as patterns, they become merely decorations. But the grasses swaying in the breeze are alive from the sap which flows in them. The sun shines. The rain falls. The days change into nights. All things flow.

'That is what I meant when I questioned Plato's absolute aesthetic contemplation. The Enlightened One objected to the Brahmins, who asserted absolute god, absolute truth, absolute goodness, and absolute beauty. All things change, said the master. And we are mid-stream. Life in all its various incarnations is a confused medley of apparently contradictory

incarnations. Some are alive. Some half alive. And some are dead. Images alone can indicate that difference between the living and the dead. They can suggest the instinct for life. The shock of the news of Nanda's conversion makes the queen in Ajanta faint. There is nothing right or wrong about the feeling of the princess, nothing moral or immoral, nothing good or bad. She feels the oncoming separation and she is about to faint. She is alive and does not want to die. I would like you to fill the images in the new wing with the instinct for life.'

Anandadeva did not seem very sure and kept his head averted.

The Chinese carver, Hsien, said :

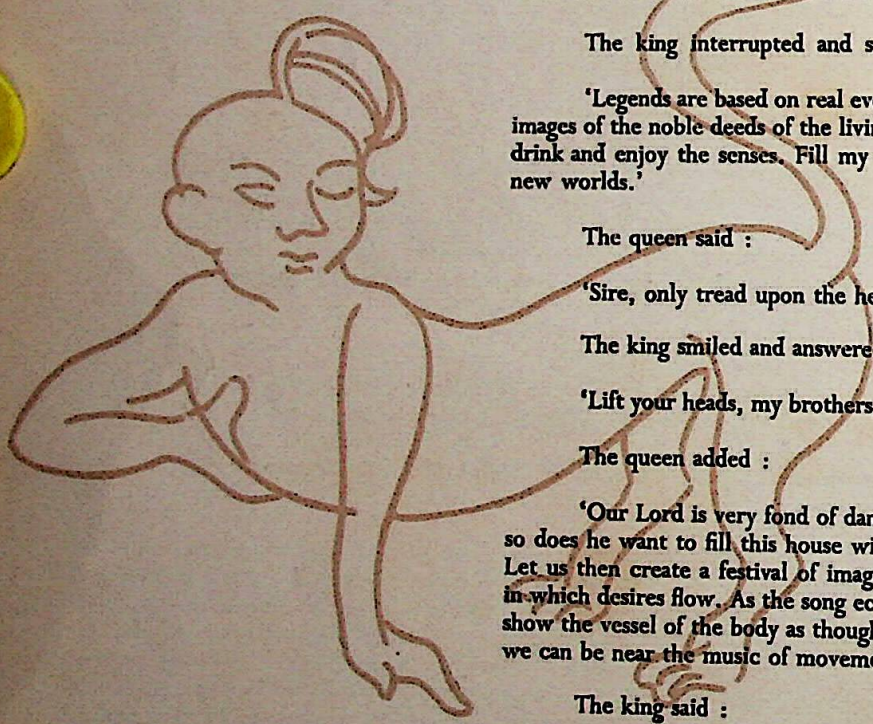
'As I have practised my skill for a long time, I have seen that when I catch the things I love, in nature, in movement, they are instinct with life, even though they are only lines in jade. Of course, I show the flow of line against the static mass. I think the hand of the artisan must be allowed free movement.'

The Greek sculptor, Androcles, said :

'We, in the West, reflect the world in the myths and legends of our Gods. But our Gods are human, except they have two wings on their shoulders.'

Anandadeva put in :

'Gautama the Buddha rejected all Gods, whether human or divine. The legends of his various incarnations are dream states. He was the kin of all things in creation.'



The king interrupted and said :

'Legends are based on real events. Do you not erect monuments to the dead ? Create images of the noble deeds of the living. In this way, the legends begin to live. I wish to eat and drink and enjoy the senses. Fill my cup of wine, queen, again and again, and I will conquer new worlds.'

The queen said :

'Sire, only tread upon the head of the foolish with a little mercy.'

The king smiled and answered :

'Lift your heads, my brothers, towards the sky, but do not forget your hands and feet.'

The queen added :

'Our Lord is very fond of dancers. Even as Gautama was fond of the dancer Amrapali, so does he want to fill this house with women who can sway in new rhythms to new songs. Let us then create a festival of images, in which the muses appear, in which things pulsate, in which desires flow. As the song echoes the pain and becomes a lament, so the image should show the vessel of the body as though it is a goblet of wine. Can it be that in the silent areas, we can be near the music of movement ?'

The king said :

'Give them the gifts and let them proceed. Let the new images show us the whole world and startle us into a new love of life. Let the dragons be slain. And let intoxication of wine be praised. Let love be celebrated. Let life prevail.'

The queen had the last word :

'Love of woman for woman—since the love of man for women is fickle and causes heartache !'

The queen distributed the gifts of cloaks of honour to the craftsmen.

The orchestra played the tunes of India, Greece, and China. The king and queen took the three master craftsmen to the banquet hall.

—MULK RAJ ANAND

BEGRAM IVORIES:
THE TRADITION OF THE MASTERCRAFTSMAN

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1. *Buddha in dhyanamudra. Gupta period 5th century A.D. One of the finest compositions of the classical Gupta period rendered with consummate skill. (Courtesy, Prince of Wales Museum)*

Silpa is a comprehensive word to cover several arts and crafts. Any work of art was hailed with joy; and the *silpin* who could produce a work of art, *silpa*, was lauded. The importance given to the craftsman is clear in an eulogy of artisans and craftsmen, including the ivory carver, in the *Aitareya Brahmana*: *silpani samsanti, devasilpanyetesham vai silpanam anukritina silpam adhigamyate hasti kamso vaso hiranyam asvatarirathas silpam, silpam hasmin adhigamyate ye evam veda* (*Aitareya Brahmana*, XXX, i). They mention the *silpas*. These are celestial works of art; in imitation of these works of art is created here a work of art; an ivory carving, a bronze object, a gold object, a carved mule chariot are works of art, a work of art is achieved by him who knows thus.

Carving in ivory was given as important a place as the art of the metal craftsman who produced bronzes, of the jeweller who fashioned the most magnificent objects of adornment. Under Panini's *sutra*, *nityam kridajivikayoh*, an example given is *dantalekhaka*, the ivory carver or a painter on ivory. It is superfluous to describe the importance of the ivory carver's work in ancient India, which was greatly patronised. With the formation of powerful guilds, important enough to have a say in the matter of carving and embellishing the huge *stupa* at Sanchi, there arose records like the inscription which describes the dextrous hands of the ivory carvers of Vidisa as responsible for the creation of so lively a monument of art as the southern *torana* gateway: *vedisehi dantakarehi rupakamam katam*, the carvers in ivory of Vidisa have done the carvings. (Epigraph. Ind. II, p. 92).

It also speaks volumes of the versatility of the silpi in ancient India. The delicate ivory craftsman could carve with ease and facility lithic compositions in larger masses and produce sculptures with a softness of touch recalling the

delicate medium that was normally his wont. Another similar example is the stone carving of Yaksha from Pitalkhora, with details of jewellery adorning the figure betraying the jeweller's craft; and the inscription in letters of the second century B. C. only confirms the execution of the piece by a goldsmith Kanhadasa. *Chitrakara*, painter, *rupakara*, sculptor, *suvarnakara*, goldsmith, *lohakara*, metal-worker, *taksha* or *vardhaki* woodcarver, *pustakara*, modeller, were all *silpins*. There was a certain versatility in them which would recall similar skill in great masters like Leonardo da Vinci and Michael Angelo.

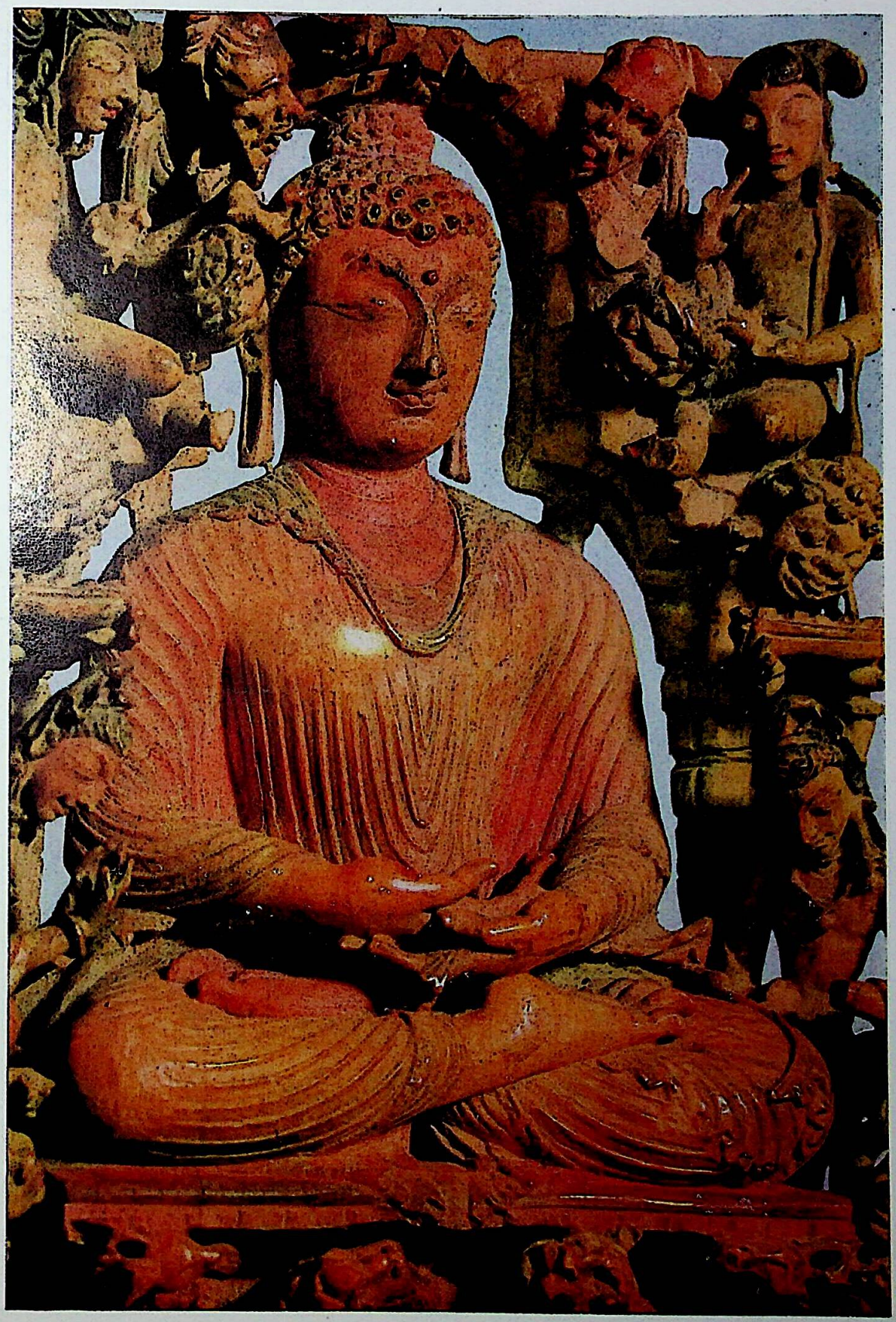
The tender care for children demanded that toys of infinite variety were provided for their amusement, in terracotta primarily, and in various other media. The toy chariot in metal from Mohenjodaro is almost echoed in the toy mule chariot mentioned in the *Aitarcya Brahmana*. The toy clay cart, a joy for Rohasena, has inspired the name of one of the most famous dramas in Sanskrit, the *Mrichchhakatika*. The more opulent caused toys to be fashioned in ivory and wood. As a little girl the princess Parvati played with *dantaputrikas*, that were not unlike *daruputrikas*, though more delicate. It is one of this type that was found in so distant a spot as Pompei. (Vogel, J. Ph. 'Note on an Ivory Statuette from Pompei', *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology*, XIII, pp. 1-5, Portfolio, Fig. 4). Ivory was used for preparing beautiful caskets. Bana mentions a *dantasapharika*, ivory casket for stocking perfumes and toilet powder. Ivory handles for toilet mirrors are also known. Inlay work was so popular that the palace of Ravana, gloriously described as bejewelled, gemset, gold and silver fashioned, had also ivory inlay, *dantankaritarupikam* (*Ramayana* VI, 9, 23). The *valabhi* or the balcony of Vasantasena, the opulent courtesan of Ujjaini, was completely decorated with ivory carving. It shone with an ivory arch illuminated by the effulgence of rare gems, *samuchchhritadantidantatoranavabhasitasya maharatnoparaga-sobhina.....vasantasenabhavanadvarasya sasrikata* (*Mrich-chhakatika* iv). The admiration of the Vidushaka on a look at it knows no bounds. Sri Harsha, the emperor whose own palace was ivory decorated describes the magnificent ivory balcony over a *torana* gate *dantatoranavalabhya uparyupavishtah* (*Ratnavali* iii). Some of the finest items of jewellery were in ivory like the *dantapatrika* simulating the curled palm leaf for the ear lobe, a pattern of *makara* for the head, *dantachudamakarika*, and *dantavalaya*, ivory bangles for the hand. Inlaid work of the highest order could be noticed in ancient Indian furniture with costly coverlet spread : *gajadantasanam suchi sottarachchhadam adhyasta* (*Raghuvamsa* XVIII, 21). It is a great pity that in the early years of this century, evidence of early Indian ivory carving had not been forthcoming and Vincent Smith had almost to lament that he was not in a position to mention a single ancient object in ivory of any importance. (*History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon*, p. 372).

Fortunately, subsequently quite a series of discoveries have brought together not only several but distinctly important ivory objects, the study of which reveals one of the most fascinating chapters of the art of the *danta-lekhaka* in ancient India. The beautiful incised drawing of a lovely nymph lazing in all her charm on an ivory comb, found at Taxila proclaims the facile hand of the Indian craftsman (Ghosh A. : *Taxila* (Sirkap), 1944-45, *Ancient India* No. 4, pp. 79-80).

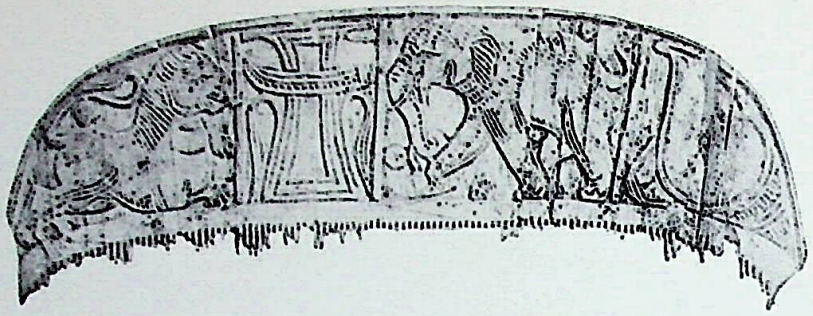
Several similar drawings of great charm incised on ivory plaques used as decorative pieces for caskets, have been found at Begram. The carving of a female figure from Ter that can be dated in the first century A. D., though not as beautiful as the one found at Pompei, is another important addition to our knowledge of early ivories (Barrett, D.E., *Ter*, p. 9). Similarly at Patna, the municipal excavations revealed a chance find of ivory carving (Jayaswal K. P., 'An Early Ivory', *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, iv. p. 75). The recent acquisition in the Prince of Wales Museum of a magnificent group of ivories from the border of Kashmir (*see opposite page*), dated to a transition period from Gupta to early medieval, and described elaborately by Moti Chandra in his magnificent study of Indian ivories, provides a very important addition to our knowledge. (Moti Chandra, 'Ancient Indian Ivories', *Prince of Wales Museum Bulletin* No. 6, pp. 4-63). Like a magician bringing forth wonderful things out of nothing, Barrett gave to the world a lovely collection of medieval ivories rediscovered by him from the stored away reserves of the British Museum. (Barrett, D. E., 'A Group of Medieval Ivories', *Oriental Art*, I, pp. 47-51). A beautiful Pala votive *stupa* in ivory in the Seattle Museum is a gem of art (Sherman Lee, 'An Early Pala Ivory', *Journal of the Society of Oriental Art*, XVIII, pp. 1-5). Though magnificently carved, late medieval ivories in the form of couch rests are known from the Indian Museum, the Asutosh Museum, the Freer Gallery, the Philadelphia Museum, the Seattle Museum and others. It is only an accident, when a small piece from a large soot-laden dark *vimana*, stored away in a lumber room of the temple, fell and revealed by its breakage an ivory core, that caused the discovery of several decorative pieces of ivory that now form a fine series of exhibits in the Temple Museum at Madurai, that illustrate the Nayak phase of art, the end of the medieval phase in India.

But the most important and probably the most fascinating is the discovery by Hackin and his colleagues of a whole collection of ivories at Begram in Afghanistan in an ancient site famous in the ancient world for its dainty wine, named after the place itself, *kapisayana madhu* from Kapisa. Discovered thirtysix years ago, they still remain as fresh in the mind of Oriental scholars as the most beloved literary pieces from Sanskrit and Prakrit. Mlle. Jeannine Auboyer and Philip Stern have made special studies of the Begram ivories in relation to Indian art and have drawn wonderful parallels all the more revealing by the close comparison of details through the pictorial examples (*Nouvelles Recherches Archaeologiques a Begram*, 2 volumes, pp. 61-82 and 19-54).

But like spring that fascinates as it returns every year, this study of the material is inexhaustible, and by its flavour rewards the fervour that goads fresh incursions in this garden of Eden. One cannot but be struck by the extraordinary coincidence in almost identical pose and stance of many of the figures from Begram with the almost contemporary Satavahana and Kushana carving from the Eastern and Western ends of the Deccan and from Mathura. The great trade routes, which during the days of the Satavahanas, Sungas, Kushanas and Kshtrapas were buzzing with long lines of caravans, undoubtedly carried ambitious sculptors and craftsmen who visited different parts of a large empire of neighbouring sovereigns, on their own, not so much in quest of wealth as for gathering



1 *Buddha in dhyanamudra, seated in a cave, Details of fig. 1. (courtesy, Prince of Wales Museum. Colour block loaned by Tata Sons Pvt. Ltd.).*



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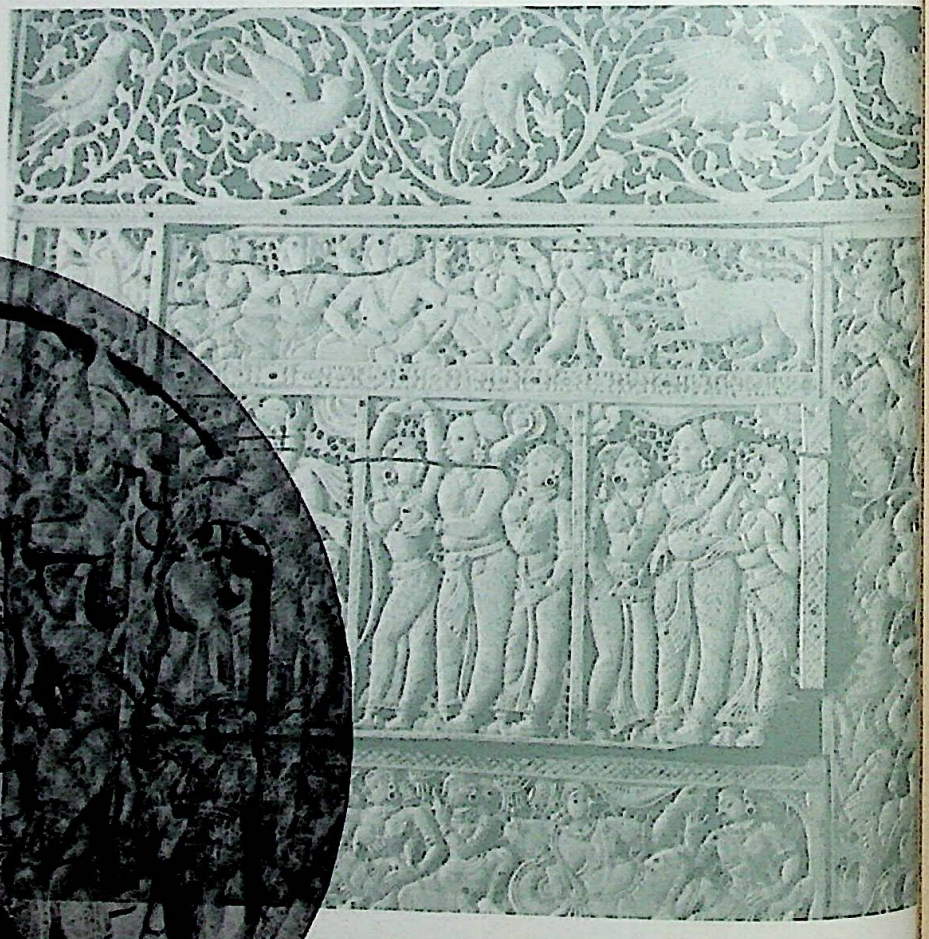
2,3. *Two sides of an ivory comb found at Taxila with the beautiful incised drawing of a lovely nymph.*

4. *Medallion from Amravati depicting Suddhodhana's visit to Maya in the Asoka grove.*

4



5. *Ivory decoration on a toilet box from Srirangam Temple Museum.*

new ideas and exhibiting their own to a larger and probably more appreciative audience. The kings themselves welcomed this large influx and efflux of capable craftsmen. It is well known from early literature that universities situated as far away as at Taxila, Varanasi, Valabhi and Kanchi attracted, in the early centuries before and after the Christian era, keen students of different branches of learning. Jivaka, the greatest physician of Buddha's day, graduated with honours in medicine from Taxila, where he was sent from Rajagriha by his father Bimbisara. Mayurasarman, a brilliant student from Vaijayanti in Kuntala sought admission in the *Ghatika* or the University of Kanchi for the highest eminence in Vedic studies. Kanchi was a place known and mentioned by Panini himself as it was a great city of learning in the south. Distance was no barrier as scholars and poets moved from place to place, as for instance Bilhana from Kashmir to the court of the Chalukya King Vikramaditya VI in the Deccan. Craftsmen also tried their fortune in different courts. Sometimes it is a case like the famous example of the sculptor Chattare Revadi Ovajja, described in an inscription from the Papanatha temple at Pattadakal as one who 'made the southern country, i.e. who built temples of the southern country' and as a sculptor from a guild of Sarvasiddiacharyas. The Sutradhari Gunda, is mentioned in an inscription from the eastern gateway of the courtyard of the Virupaksha temple as the sculptor who constructed the temple for Lokamahadevi, the queen of Vikramaditya II to commemorate his conquest of Kanchi three times over. This is a clear proof of royal admiration for sculptural excellence in the enemy country. Vikramaditya undoubtedly brought the great masters of the south to build his temples at Pattadakal, as epigraphical evidence proves it. But even on one's own, the desire to see and learn and exchange ideas took the sculptors to the ends of the earth, as distance was not an impediment to the mind that was determined in its purpose.

That the sculptors and the carvers continued a long and unbroken tradition of workmanship is clear in the boast of Sauarasi, a late Chalukya sculptor, who could entwine forms of elephant, lion, bull and many other forms so as to shine among the letters of the inscription he drew like the curves composing motifs of design. It is this mode that centuries earlier is found in the entwined figures of animals and birds in long meandering creepers composing lovely patterns of incised sketch on ivory plaques at Begram. In this it is interesting to see how the tradition of design (*patra*), with details of each part composing it, like *kalika*, *kantaka*, *sakha*, *tribhanga* and *patra*, bud, thorn, stem, tribend and leaf, is indicated. That is why the design itself came to be called *patralekha* or *patrarachana*. It is because the element of leaf predominates that it is called *patralekha*. It is all the more interesting that this terminology is preserved in a casual reference to it in a literary composition, the *Nalachampu*, a prose romance. This proves how deep was education in ancient India embracing different fields of study, enabling a general poet to enshrine in his works accurate passages that could be valuable to us for a rich and varied art terminology: *Chitravidyam ivanekakantakapatralatasthanakavishamam* (*Nalachampu*, p. 164). It is this order followed at Begram, as in other friezes from Mathura, Sanchi, Amaravati or Bharhut, that, coupled with the animals and birds entwined by the *lata* or creeper in its several flights, and issuing either from the mouth of the *makara* or of the dwarf Yaksha, that make it so singularly charming for comparison (Portfolio, Figs. 15 & 16). Sometimes the creeper originates from the navel of a Yaksha, sometimes from the open mouth of the celestial elephant Airavata itself as at Bharhut.

Swans in a row, with the neck bent down (Portfolio, Figs. 34 & 35), the bill touching the ground, and with the wings raised up, almost carrying up the body itself, as they march along in stately gait, look the very picture of similar birds in life petrified on the abacus of the Asokan pillar capital from Rampurva. This wonderful naturalistic theme of the third century B.C. has continued to inspire successive sculptors; and in the Kushana period here is a similar row of geese at Begram, paying a tribute, as it were, to the earlier Mauryan sculptor. Individually geese have been portrayed with greater animation, with a longer thrust forward of the neck, and a wilder flutter of the wings and probably a cackle that remains mute in the incised drawing.

Valmiki sings of the same motif in the Pushpaka palace, only the wings of the birds are inlaid with coral and decorated with golden flowers, but they are sportingly expanded into a curve ; they look the very wings of Cupid : *pravalajambunadapushpapakshas salilam avarjitajihmapakshah kamasya sakshad iva bhanti prakshah krita vihangas sumukhas supakshah* (*Ramayana* V, 7, 13).

The caryatid motif is not merely to support something but actually to carry the most auspicious essence of life, the *purnaghata* symbolising water, prosperity, plenty. A dwarf *Yaksha* simulating a *gana* with the cross-belt marked on his chest to suggest a warrior of great strength, carries atlantis-like the *purnaghata*, the pitcher of plenty, on his head (*see* p.14a). The lotus stalks and flowers issuing from the *purnaghata* suggest a perennial stream, the source of life. This is almost an echo of Siva, the ideal warrior as Tripurantaka entitled to *chhannavira*, the military cross-belt carrying lightly on his *jatas* the stream of Ganga. Rivers themselves are personified in anthropomorphic form or shown symbolically as a *purnaghata* respectively. The natural mode of representation is the stream, but here is the vase, and down below Siva almost as Vamadeva, the dwarf, the great warrior ; the great lifter of the universe itself in his aspect as Tripurantaka when he held aloft the mountain Meru itself.

The attitude of the dwarf is that of the typical caryatid described in the *Ramayana*, *vahanti yam kundalasobhitanana mahasana vyomachara nisacharah* (*Ramayana* V, 8, 7). The prominent *kundalas* and the large paunch suggestive of their voracious feed and their mighty strength equal to that of the *rakshasas* as described in the text are answered here.

Ashtamangalas or the eight auspicious symbols are also known and repeated at Begram. It may be recalled that the *ashtamangalas* play an important part in the Jaina *ayagapatas*. The pair of fish here at Begram is exactly as it occurs on the famous *ayagapata* from Mathura in the National Museum.

The other themes occurring on the ivories are not less interesting. There is a woman, suggestively indicating her charm of form and her influence over her lover, as a tender sprout placed on her ear as decoration is enough to excite him : *kisalayaprasavopi vilasinam madayita dayitasravanarpitah* (*Raghuvamsa* ix, 28). In another ivory, a pregnant

queen is helped by attendant women to be as sparse of jewels as possible : *sarirasadad asamagrabhushana* (*Raghuvamsa*, III). The heavy anklet is almost slipped off her leg. Bereft of jewels she is yet beautiful like the pale moon at the break of day. In this, we are reminded of the similar situation in an Amaravati medallion where Maya, the expectant mother, is visited by Suddhodana (p. 12).

The ivory plaque representing the damsel separated from her lover pining for her lord talking to the parrot perched on her shoulder, *prichchhanti va madhuravachanam sarikam panjarastham* (*Meghaduta*, II, 25), the theme of her conversation revolving on the absent lover, definitely recalls the Kushana sculpture of the Yakshi talking to the parrot. Only here in the plaque, the anklet bells of the damsel also recall the verse describing the Yakshi sounding the bells by her movements as she dances the peacock at eventide : *talais sinjavalayasubhagaih kantaya nartito me yam adhyaste divasavigame nilakanthas suhrid vah* (*Meghaduta*, II, 18).

The eternal theme of the mother and child is wonderfully shown in another ivory piece. She stands under a *torana* gateway. The child on the hip fondly hugged by the mother is a theme in many a terracotta from Mathura (Portfolio, Fig. 10). Though this is only another such, it is executed with such devotion by the ivory carver that it almost seems to breathe and better reveal itself to the spectator. The ear ornaments is the *patra* probably *dantapatrikas*; the pearl necklace has a large pendant sapphire, *sthulamadhyendranilam* (*Meghaduta*, I, 46). The *rasana* is elaborate and the bracelet is composed of a large number almost covering the *prakoshtha* (forearm). The child is marked by the *kakapaksha* (juvenile sidelocks).

The young married damsel confiding her love to her maid, who intoxicates her by the offer of mead, is a charming ivory plaque, where the flush of youth and the preparation to meet the young lover, with her eyes turbid with passion by a sip of liquor, is all evident. She is a *Vasakasajjika*, eager expectant lover, fully bedecked in a variety of jewellery, with fresh flowers all over her braid, a fresh pendanus also included to waft a soft perfume. That she is creeper-like and could cling to the lover as a creeper to a tree, is suggestively indicated : *tadvitapasrita lata* (*Raghuvamsa*, VIII). She is surely a lotus, but not from the water, and in her lotus face is a pair of blue lilies; and all these make up a golden creeper—truly this is a picture of feminine charm : *kamalam anambhasi kamale kuvalayam etani kanakalatikayam.*

Her sportive joy is expressed in another plaque where lovingly clasping her companion she almost whirls around in a *desi* mode of folk dance.

Like the goddess of prosperity rising out of the waters, a damsel comes up the steps of the pool, with water dripping from her long lovely locks of hair like pearls scattered on earth, and the swan looks up eagerly longing for those pearls as it imagines—*muktalubdha rajahamsa*. The swan near the feet of the damsel adorned with jingling anklets suggests her gait more charming than that of the ruddy goose and more pleasant than its soft note. In fact a plaque from Begram showing the damsel walking with the goose following her gait is a fine example recalling Kalidasa's verse, *kalahamsishu madalasam gatam* (*Raghuvamsa*, VIII).

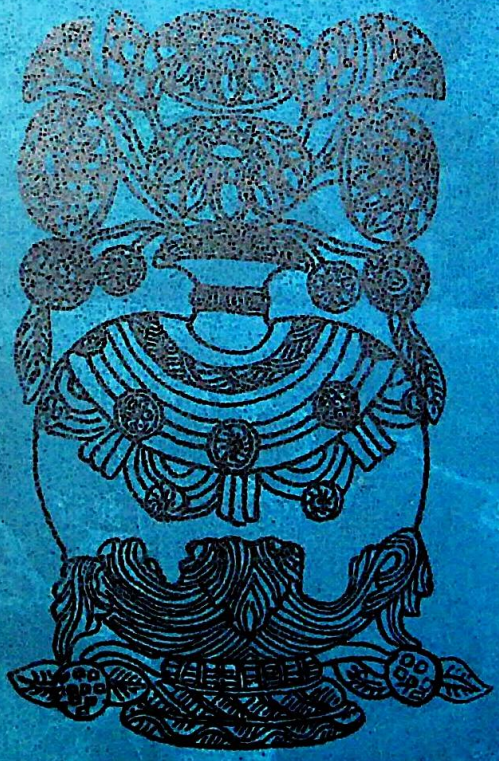
A *prasadhika* attendant dressing up the princess, seated on a couch, softly combing the hair and arranging a flower garland on it as the lady holds up a mirror for a taste of her beauty, while another attendant is ready with a toilet box for other items of toiletry, is indeed a charming plaque. The interior of the harem is suggested by the closed door of the gateway, but inside the harem, she is in the open courtyard, with the *vedika* or the rail indicating a large open court. An incised drawing of extraordinary elegance also from Begram shows two attendants waiting on their mistress who is seated leisurely on a couch awaiting an elaborate dress-up. All these cannot but recall the line of Kalidasa where each limb is held by the *prasadhika* for slipping on an ornament or arranging a garland or painting the collyrium in a series of items making up an elaborate programme of toilet : *prasadhikalambitam agrapadam* (*Raghuvamsa* VII, 7).

It is noteworthy that here we have the earliest incising of double lines at intervals to indicate drapery, a feature quite common in medieval sculpture as from Khajuraho. It is amazing how traditions in art persist. Begram was a great meeting spot of cultures. In the early centuries of the Christian era, in Amaravati, Nagarjunakonda, Mathura, almost everywhere, one could see Roman influences and Roman motifs. It is therefore not surprising that against a purely Indian motif of a damsel on one side, there is another showing almost a Roman costume for a somewhat elderly woman. It is probably a *kuttani*, elderly courtesan, who had lived her life of charm, and now covers herself up more than she would have done in the prime of her youth. In the other, the damsel with her pointing finger on her lip suggests admiration and wonder, wonder probably at her own charm and beauty.

There are other plaques illustrating the gay life of damsels as they amused themselves playing the ball, and the poet could very well remark 'beaten by the soft lotus hand of the damsel, you fall down, but, again and again bump up. O ball ! I know your mind, it is surely because of your desire to kiss her lips you do so ' : *vanitakaratamarasadhihatah patitah punar utpatasi viditam, nanu kanduka te hridayam vanitadharasangamalubdham iva.*

The sculptor at Begram has a great flair for the study of anatomy and form. This is most obvious in the animal drawings. They are quick, lightning sketches, catching a moment of action like the bull licking his leg, the horse tearing up the earth with his hoof, the elephant nodding his head and curling his trunk, the deer skipping or pausing to flee again, the lion, tail raised up, smelling the ground, to make sure of his pursuit of his prey. And the animals chosen are also the most important ones in Buddhist belief, the bull signifying the taurine symbol, the Zodiac sign associated with Buddha's birth, the elephant, the dream of Maya of her conception, the horse, the great renunciation, always symbolically represented by the delineation of Kantaka, the favourite horse, the lion, the great lion among the Sakyas, Sakyasimha, and the frisking deer Mrigadava, the deer park, where fearlessly animals could roam about, and where alone, Sakyamuni, the Sakya sage could expound his great *Dhamma*.

C. SIVARAMAMURTI



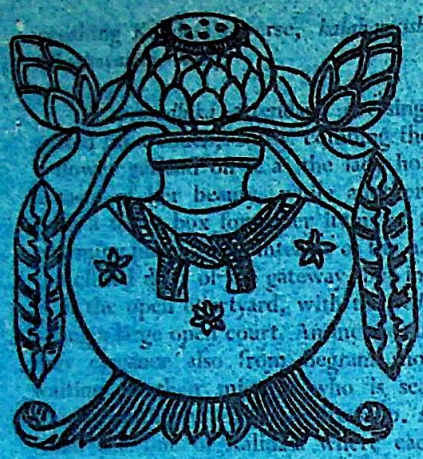
PORTFOLIO

IMAGE-ECHOES:

BEGRAM BARHUT MATHURA

SANCHI AMRAVATI NAGARJUNAKONDA

The site of Begram showing the ruins of Kapisa Palace where the ivories were found.



PORTFOLIO

IMAGE-ECHOES:

BEGRAM BARIKOT MATHURA

SANCHI AMRAVATI NAGARJUNAKONDA

The site of Begram showing the ruins of Kapisa Palace where the ivories were found.

C. SIVARAMAMURTI

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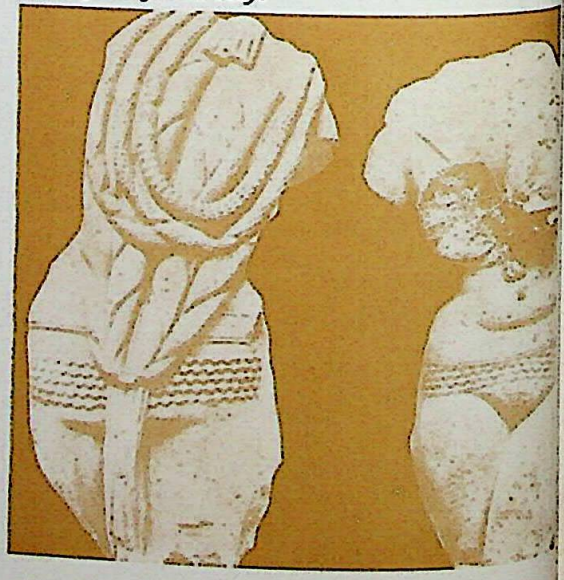
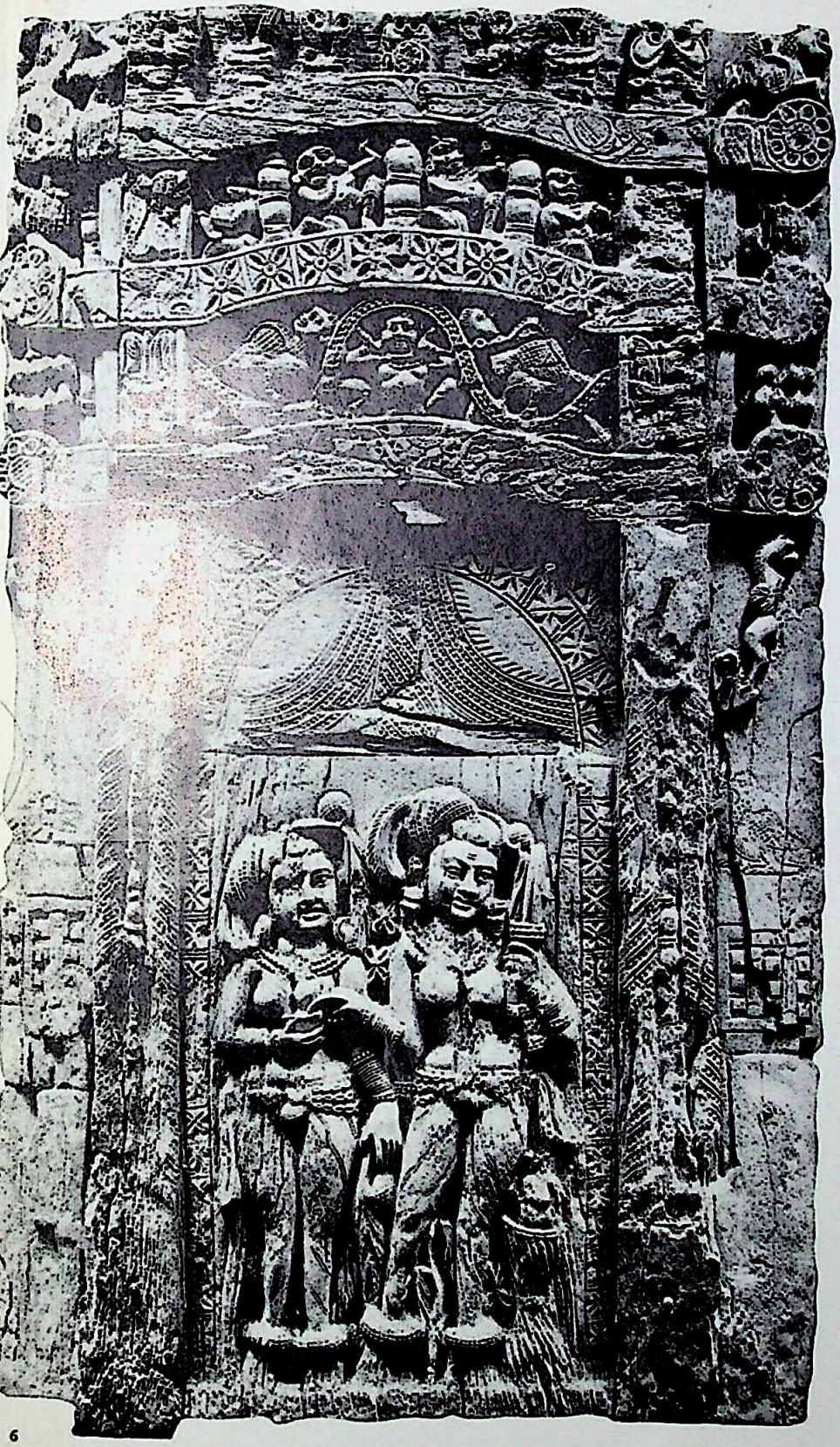
1 *Already before the Christian era, the linear rhythm which had been a special characteristic of Indian sensibility was expressing itself not only in Barhut, Sanchi and Mathura, but further south in Jaggayyapeta. The contours of the figure of the Universal King are almost lyrical. The folds of the clothes are rhythmically drawn. The resilience of the taut male figure is contrasted to the curves of the female body.*





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2 *The volumes of the female figure are combined with a flowing movement. In the 2nd century A.D. at Mathura, the earlier Kushan sharpness has already yielded to the tender swaying line.*

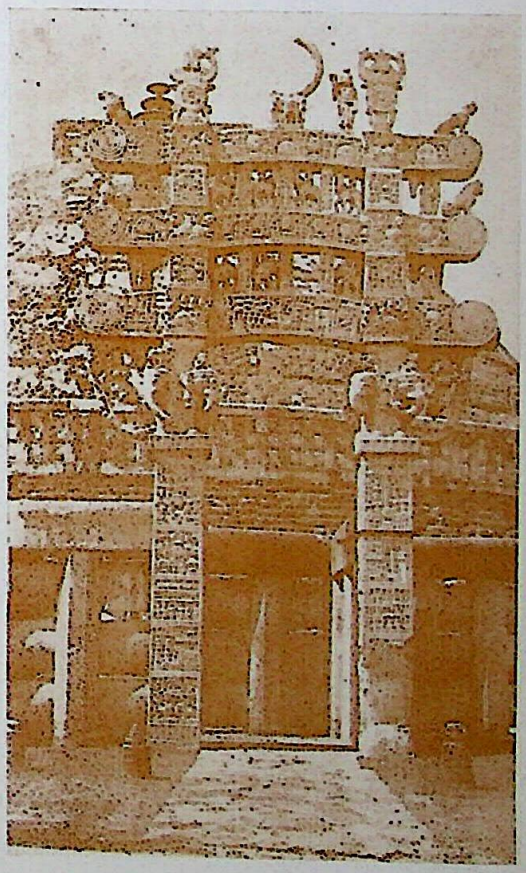
3 *Under the Sungas in the 2nd century B.C., we see a parallel to the kind of configuration which was attempted in the ivories found at Begram. The emphasis on the pudenda is derived from the terracotta art of the fertility cults.*

4 *The Indian ivory found at Pompeii is also a work of the period before Christ. Exquisitely carved, with its remarkably fine detail, it is similar to the Yakshis from Mathura in its emphasis on the female parts, inspired by the indigenous terracotta art.*

5 *The Sanchi torso may be post-Christian, but is obviously the product of men familiar with the technique of chiselling in ivory, with its fine curved line, detailed jewellery and rhythmic flow.*

6 *This ivory found at Begram has obvious relationship to the ivory carver's art, Buddhist symbology and formalism found in Sanchi. The adaptation is, however, in the interests of a certain hedonism which is away from the piety of the stupa.*

7 *One of the gateways of the Sanchi stupa, which had obviously set a model before the sculptors of the Buddhist world.*



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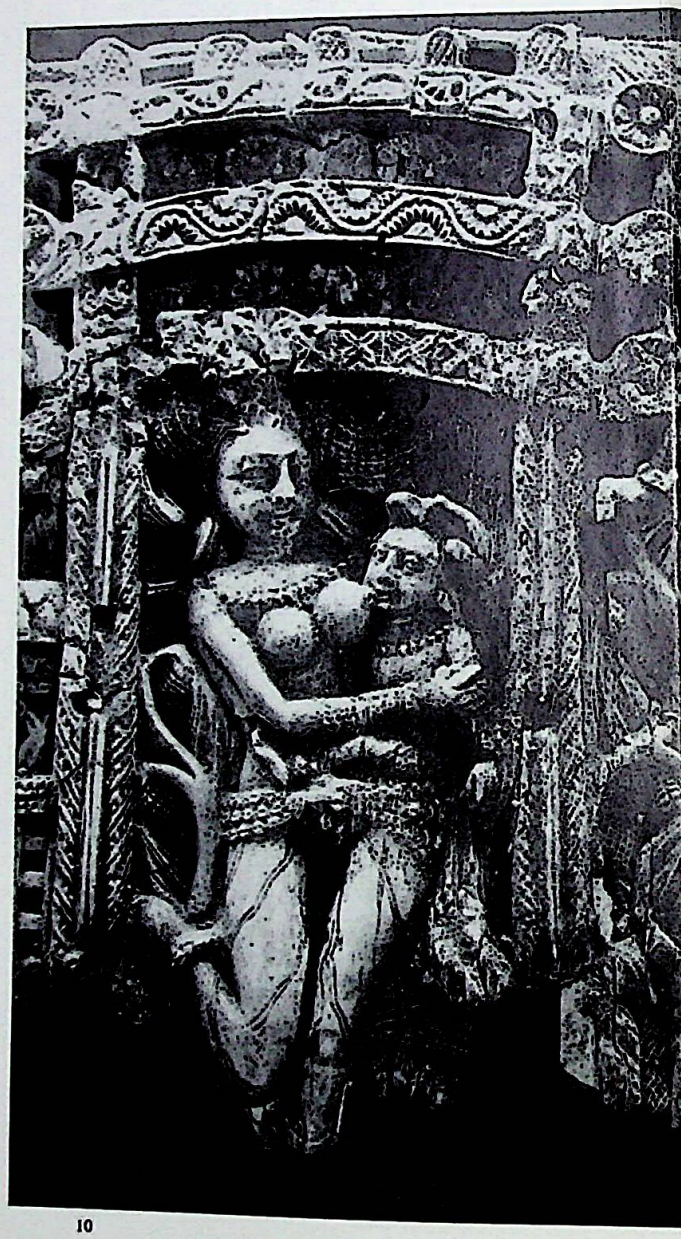

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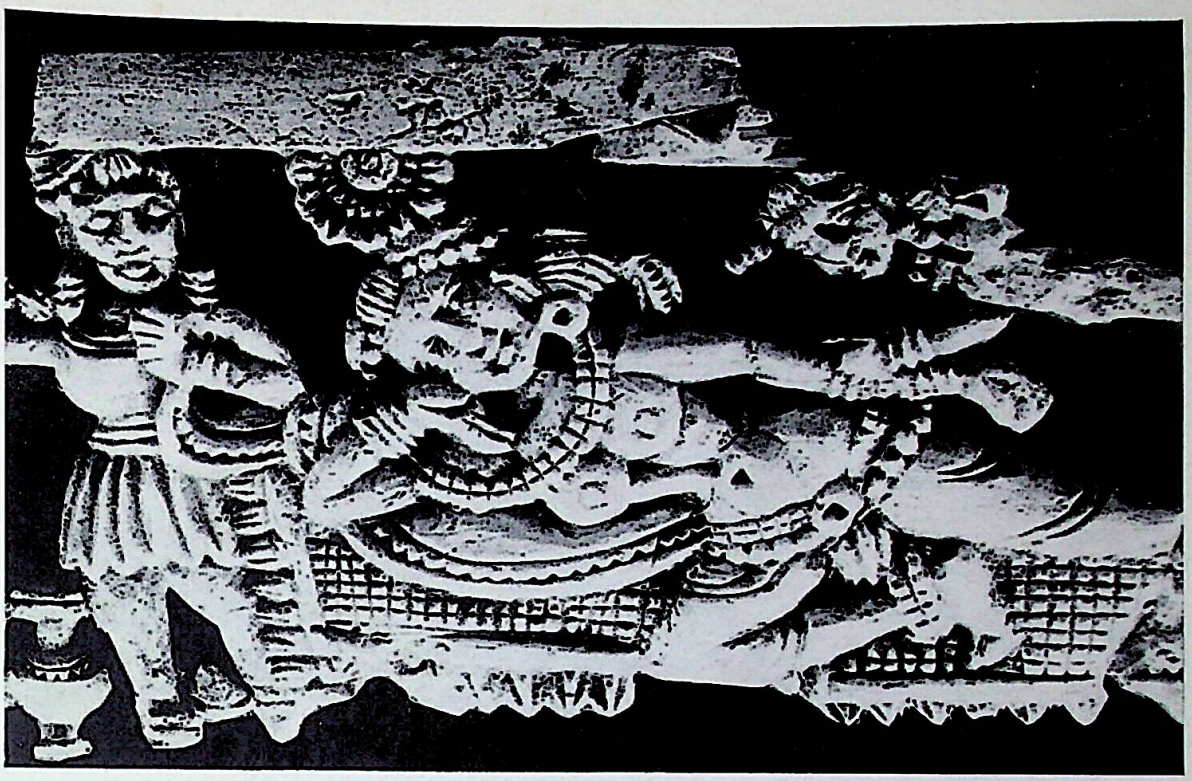
8-10 *The technique of ivory carving depends for its effect on the remarkable incisions which reproduce detail in a very small space. These miniature figures, encased in Sanchi-like gateways, are mature products of a sensibility which has exercised itself for some centuries. The elasticity of the figures and their animation and tenderness is symptomatic of a culture which knew sensuous joy.*



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11-13 *The Jataka story of Queen Maya's nativity was a popular myth of the Buddhist world. The stance of the lying figure was accepted in the symbolism from Amravati to Gandhara. The ivory carver's adaptation found in Begram in Fig.* 11 *is highly successful, though in a sharper line, influenced by the Graeco-Roman naturalism. It is somewhat stiffer in Fig.* 13, *though more primitivist. The prototype in stone sculpture from Amravati, Fig.* 12 *is marked by organic movement of all figures in the composition.*

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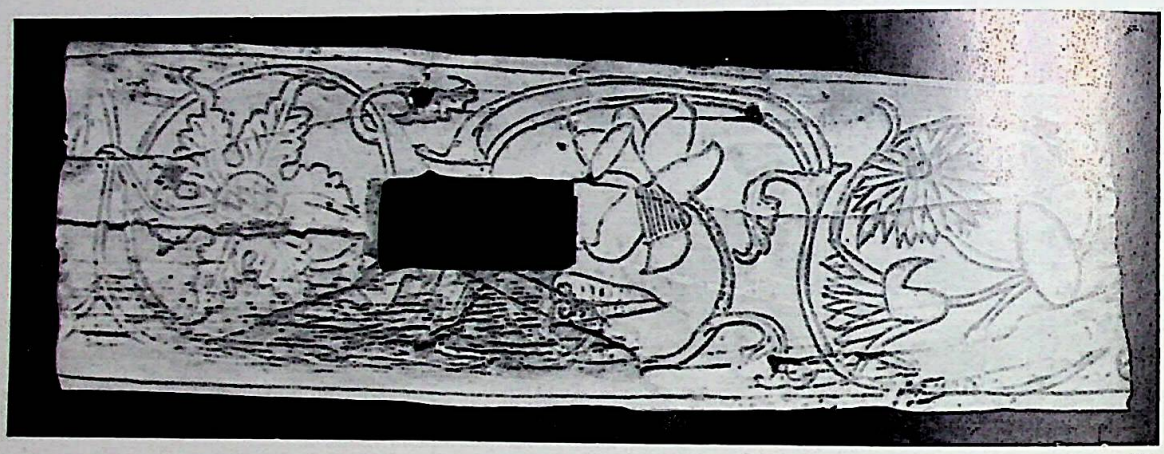

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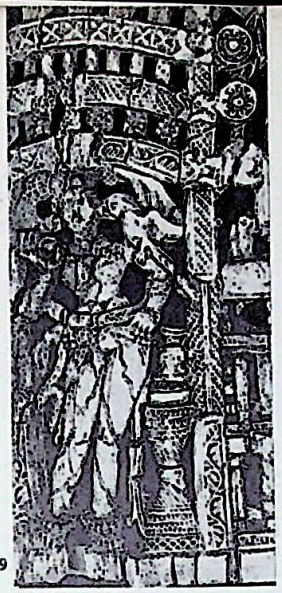
14-16 *The creeper which began at Barhut, Fig.* 14, *under the Sungas, as a binding line to connect the figures in relief panels, was adapted to floral caligraphy by the ivory workers in their miniature art. Fig.* 15 *shows the ingenius way in which stems and flowers are connected up in the flowing line of the creeper. In Fig.* 16, *the creeper issues out of the mouth of the dwarf and takes in the lion form in its sweep. The unity of all things flowing from each other is delicately suggested.*

17-18 *The female wringing the hair after the bath was seized upon by the Indian carver of Yakshi figure in Mathura, Fig.* 17, *for the expression of a tender moment. The adaptation by the ivory carver is more sensuous, but the iconography is similar in all the details of the folds of clothes, the jewellery and the contours of the female in Fig.* 18.

19-20 *Again, the waiting female, talking to the parrot, affords the theme for the expression of a sentiment, which the carvers, both in stone and ivory, found useful for their lyrical intentions. The similarity of theme and skill shows that the carvers could handle stone, gold, ivory or wood, with equal facility before and after the Christian era.*



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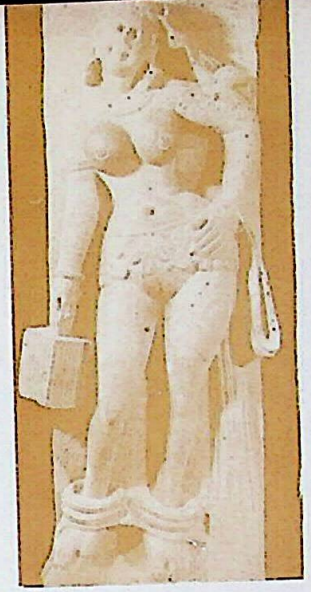

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21-22 *The blandishments of the Yakshi from the stupa at Mathura, Fig. 22, is rendered with equal grace in the ivory found at Begram. Obviously, the traffic of craftsmen was constant, their genius for carving comprehensive, and their ability for adaptation of the highest calibre.*

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23-28 *The concordances between the figures carved in ivory, Figs.* 23, 26, 28 *with the stone reliefs of Nagarjunakonda, Figs.* 24, 25, *and Mathura Fig.* 27, *obviously suggest a common Universe for discourse.*

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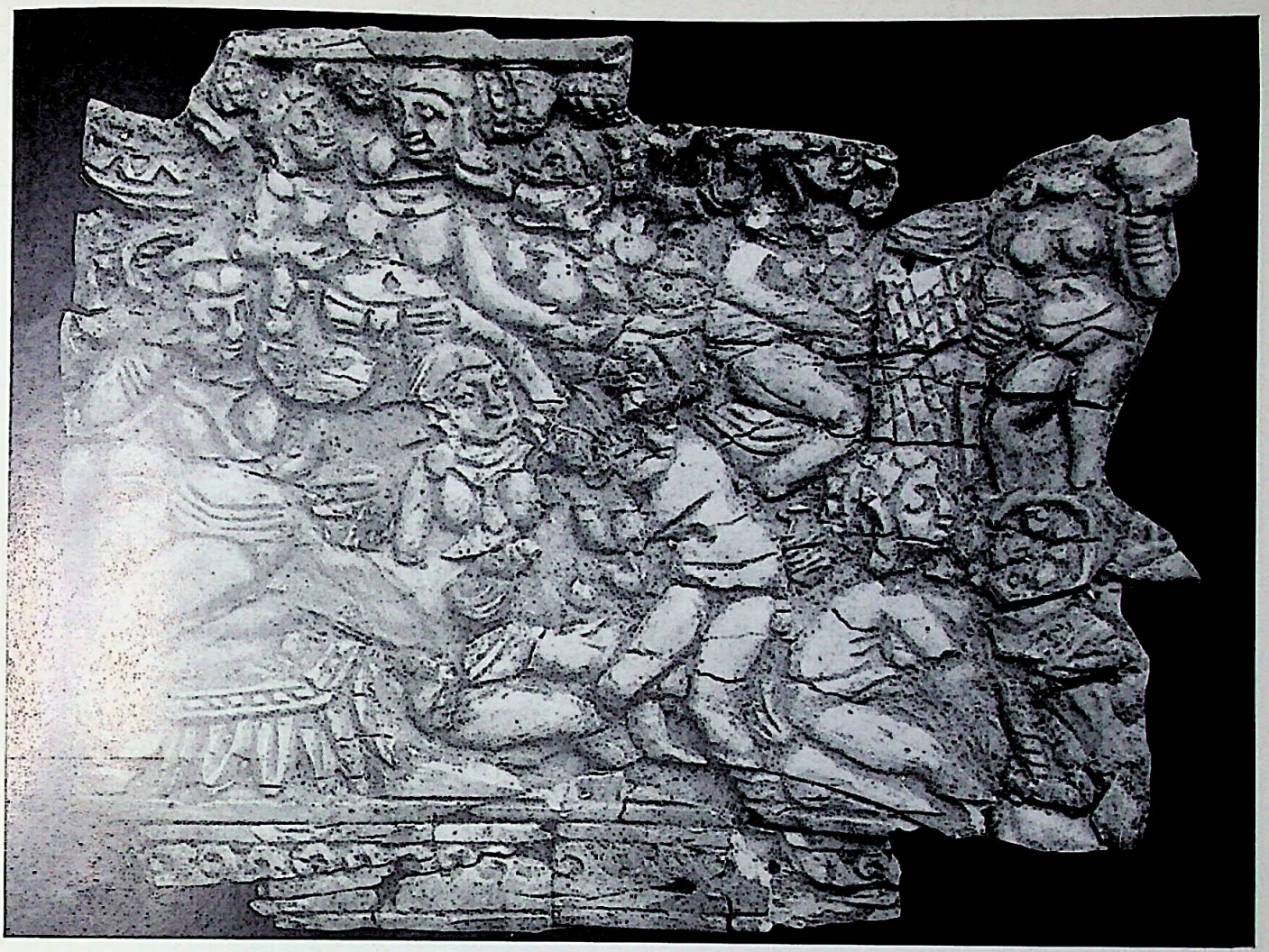

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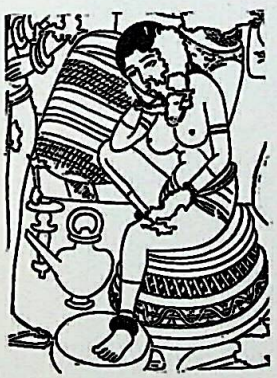

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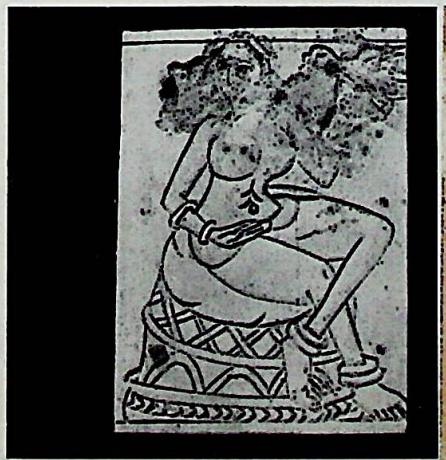
29-33 *The Buddhist art at Nagarjunakonda, as represented in Fig.* 32, *had its affiliations with Amravati. And Amravati had infiltrations from the early caves at Ajanta, Fig.* 30. *And all these techniques seem to have travelled with the ivory carvers, whose works were found at Begram. In all these panels, the dexterous treatment of the figure seated on a stool shows a shared culture. Apart from the physical elements the animation of the scenes with sensuous delight in life seems to be common. The resultant aesthetic is that of happiness as a reminder of the passing away of things.*



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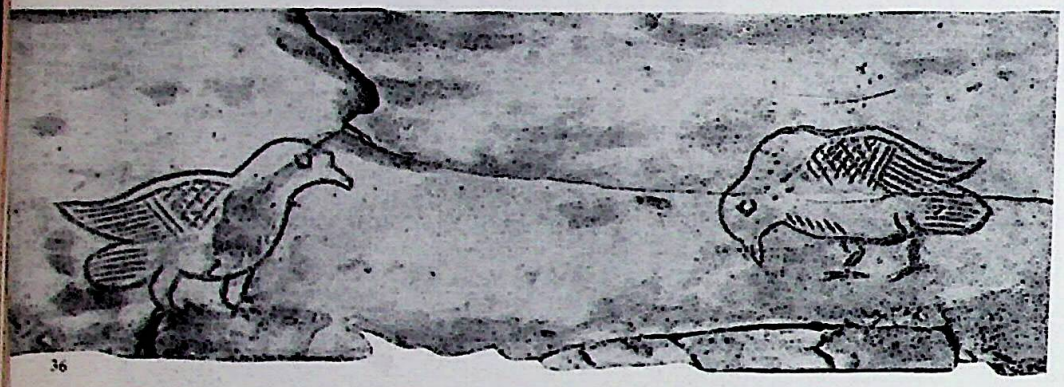

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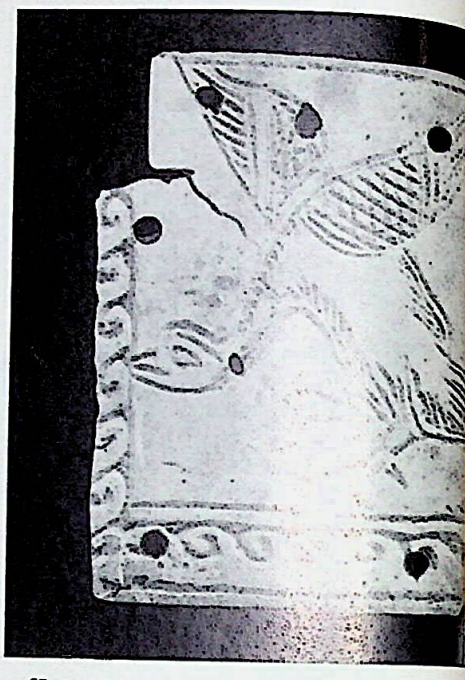

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34-39 *Plants and animals and birds were conceived by the Buddha as akin to the humans. The graceful swan was made the symbol of one of his early incarnations. That is why the abacus of the Ashoka Lion Capital at Sanchi was decorated with gracefully bending swans, Fig. 35. In the ivories of Begram, we find an adaption of the swan in that stance, Fig. 34, and various other fluid movements. The treatment of other birds is also characterised by animated flow. They are all instinct with life.*

40-44 *The energised movements of animals in the ivories found at Begram is symptomatic of the Indian carver's techniques of showing all phenomena of life in movement. Even the decorative winged lion is informed by vitality. The lion in Fig. 44 is drinking water. The wild ass is running and the cow is licking its toe with a vigour reminiscent of Mathura, where the mother was often shown caressing its young in tenderness.*

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45-48 *The engraved line as against the relie was practised at Nagarjunakonda, when an example survives, as the beginning o the process of sculpture. This shows that there was intimate relationship betwee the techniques of ivory carving and ston work. The elongated, moon-breasted, swan-waisted, elephant-hipped females here hav as much in common with the Nagarjuna-konda forms as with Mathura. Th robustness of the Mathura Yakshis and their heavy peasant contours have yielded to a more delicate, sensuous expression. The hedonism of the figures owes itself t the Graeco-Roman influence. The coiffur is also suggestive of the floral wreath of the Aegean Sea. The fusion of the eastern and western strains which did no happen in Gandhara is realised here.*

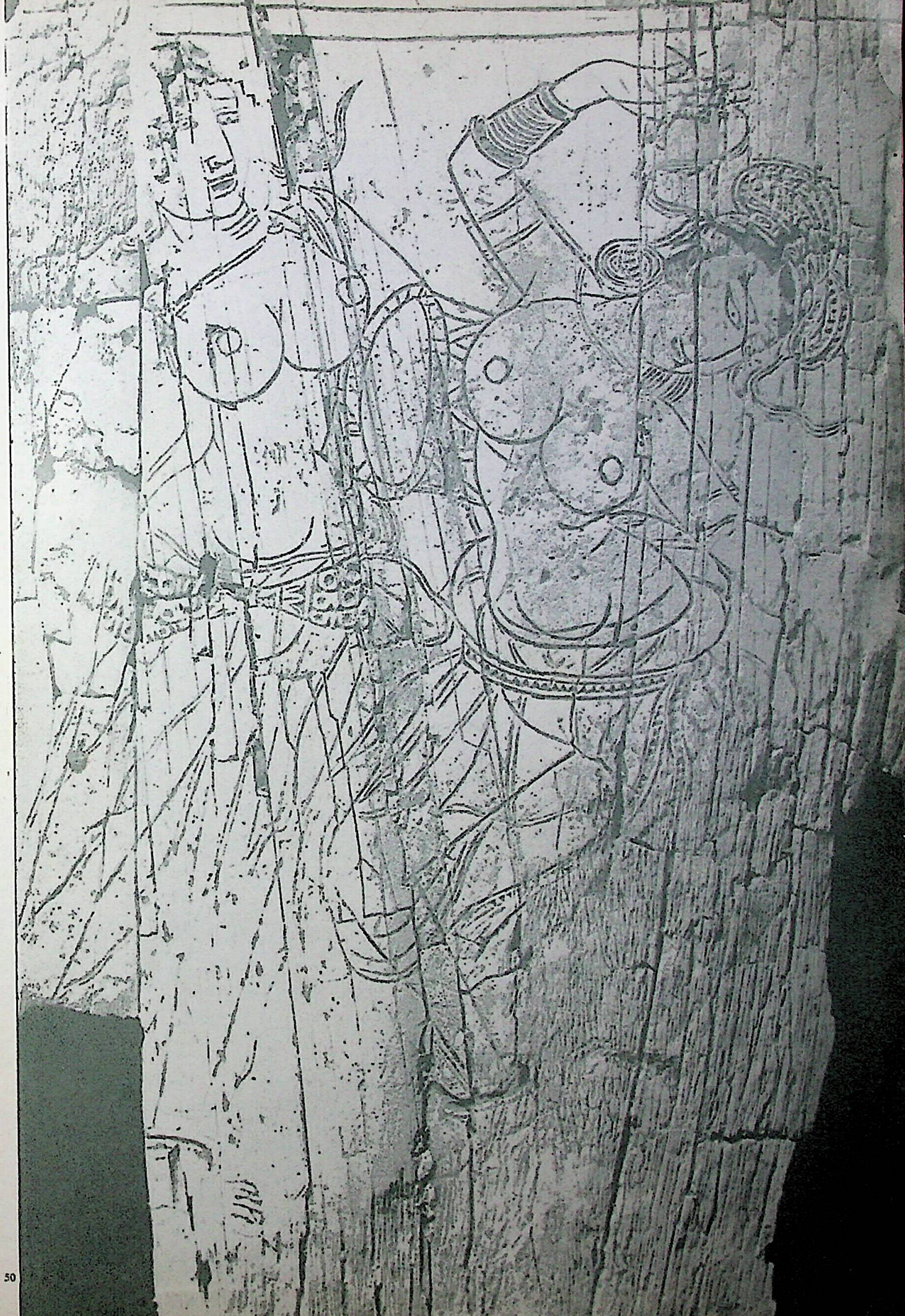
(Photos: Lance Dane and Musee Guimet

49 *The linear rhythm in this composition o the two female figures is a continuation in the engraving technique in ivory of the principle already discovered by the practic at Barhut, Amravati and Nagarjuna-konda. The formalised patterns of foliage in the top panels gives the necessary contrast.*

(Photo: Lance Dane)

50 *If suppleness and movement, and the sensuous joy emanating from the dance, ha been realised at Amravati in stone, it i here rendered in a more exquisite and tender manner than in the stone sculptures*

(Photo: Lance Dane)



51 *The blandishment of the yakshi with the lotus in her hand and the swan looking up is rendered in an exquisite carving of the moment of abandon in nature. Could this be a Salbhanjika conceived after the Indian Yakshi and become the Greek female in the Bachannalian festival?*

(Photo: Musee Guimet)

52 *The volumes beloved of the Indian carver met in Gandhara the naturalistic skill of the Greek and Roman sculptors. This lovely figure fuses the genius of the two schools. The delicate curvacious line of the female, the full breasts and slightly protuberant navel, are Indian. The face and the coiffeur are Graeco-Roman. Detail of Fig. 55* *(Photo: Lance Dane)*

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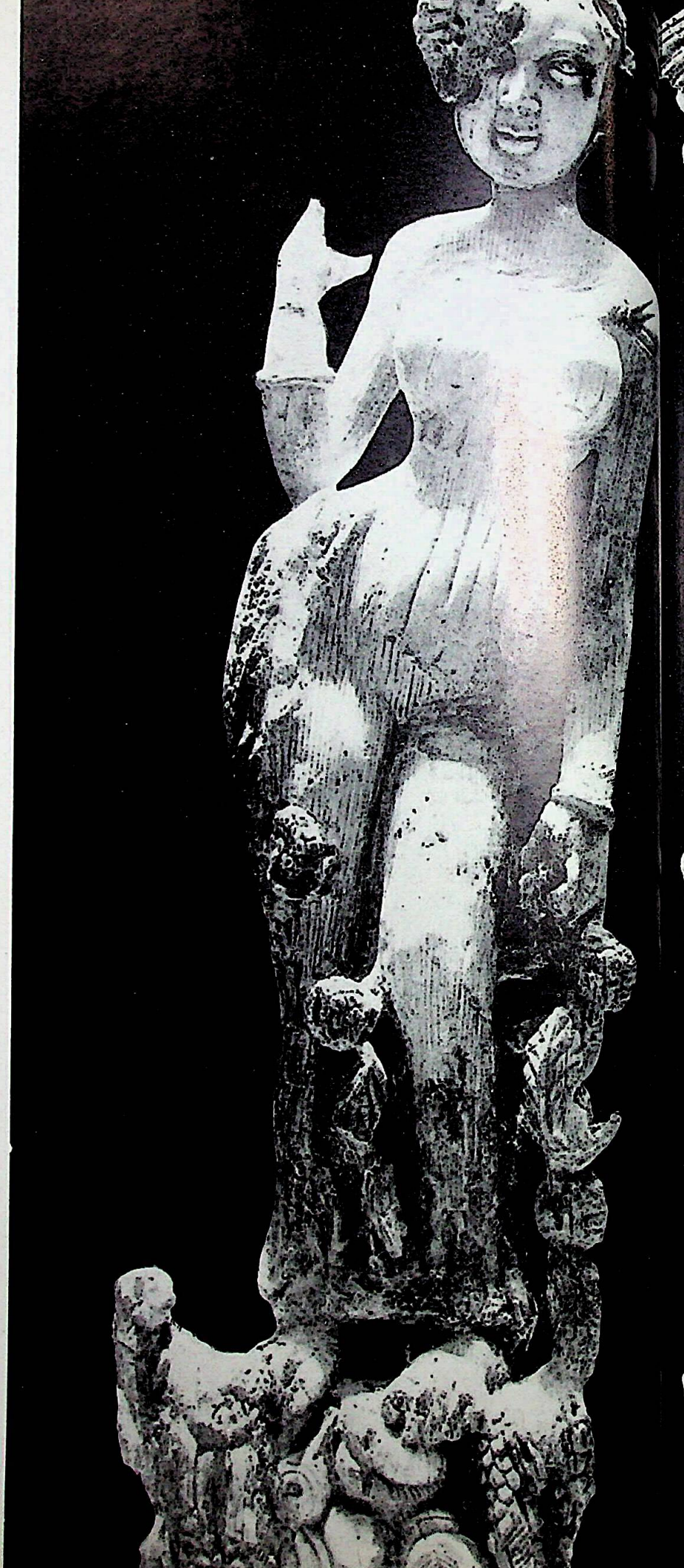
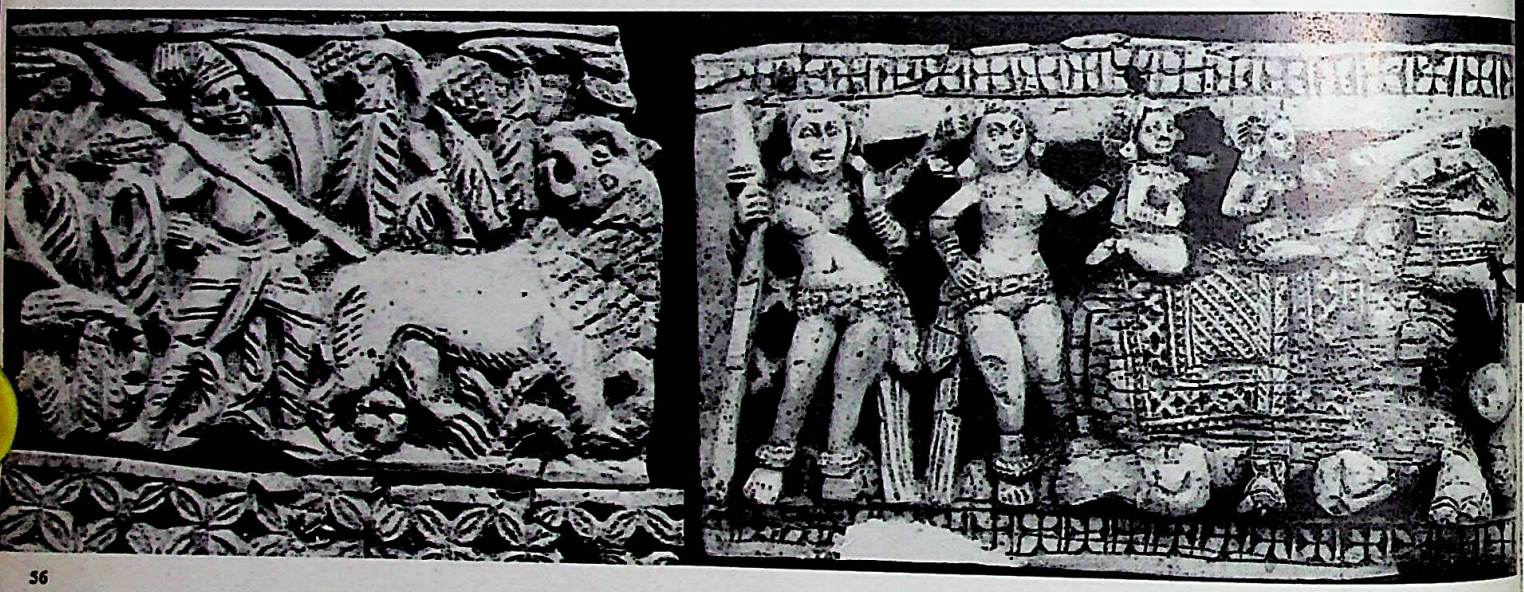


53-55 *These female figures carved from the Greek models, with the Indian habiliments, are some of the finest products of the mixed strains in the chisels of the Indo-Graeco-Roman craftsmen. These may have been the original prototypes in that hybrid world of the 1st century B.C. to the 1st century A.D., even as they are in the cosmopolitan world of Kabul today. But as the reference to forms is more than immediate, they tend to become prototypes of a mixed culture. Chauvinism cannot explain beauty. It happens wherever the chisel of genius fashions clay or stone or wood, or, in this case, ivory.*

56-57 *The themes for these panels are taken from the Jataka stories but appear secular. The important thing is the vitality of movement of the horse and the dog and the elephant and the man in the two lower panels as against the aesthetic carving of the two upper ones.*

(*Photos: Lance Dane*)



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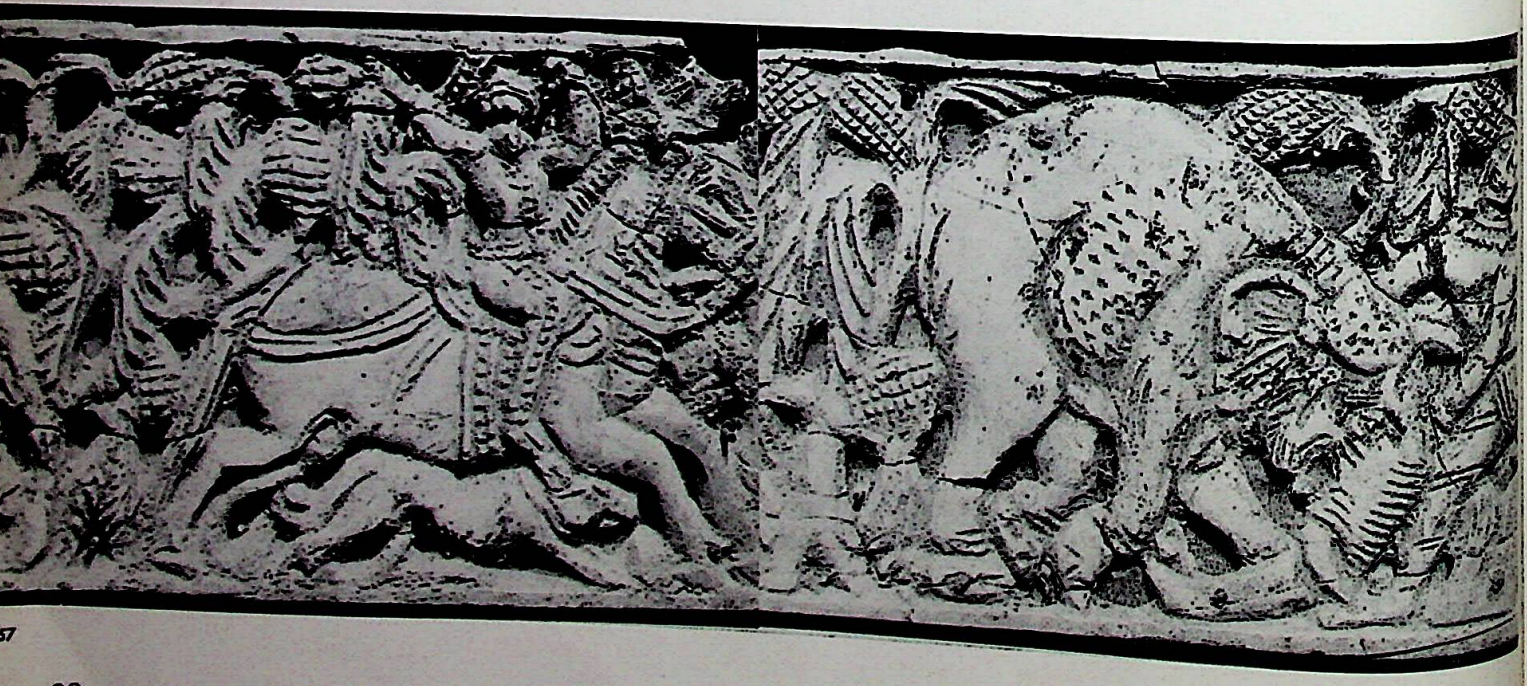

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58-60 *The tablets inset in the back rest of the chair have reference back to the lyrical movement already embodied in the gambolling couples of Nagarjunakonda.*
(*Photos: Lance Dane*)

61 *The montage of carving here shows the miscellaneous genius of the ivory workers, capable of handling almost everything, including what is not here—a figure falling from a fourth floor window.*
(*Photos: Lance Dane*)

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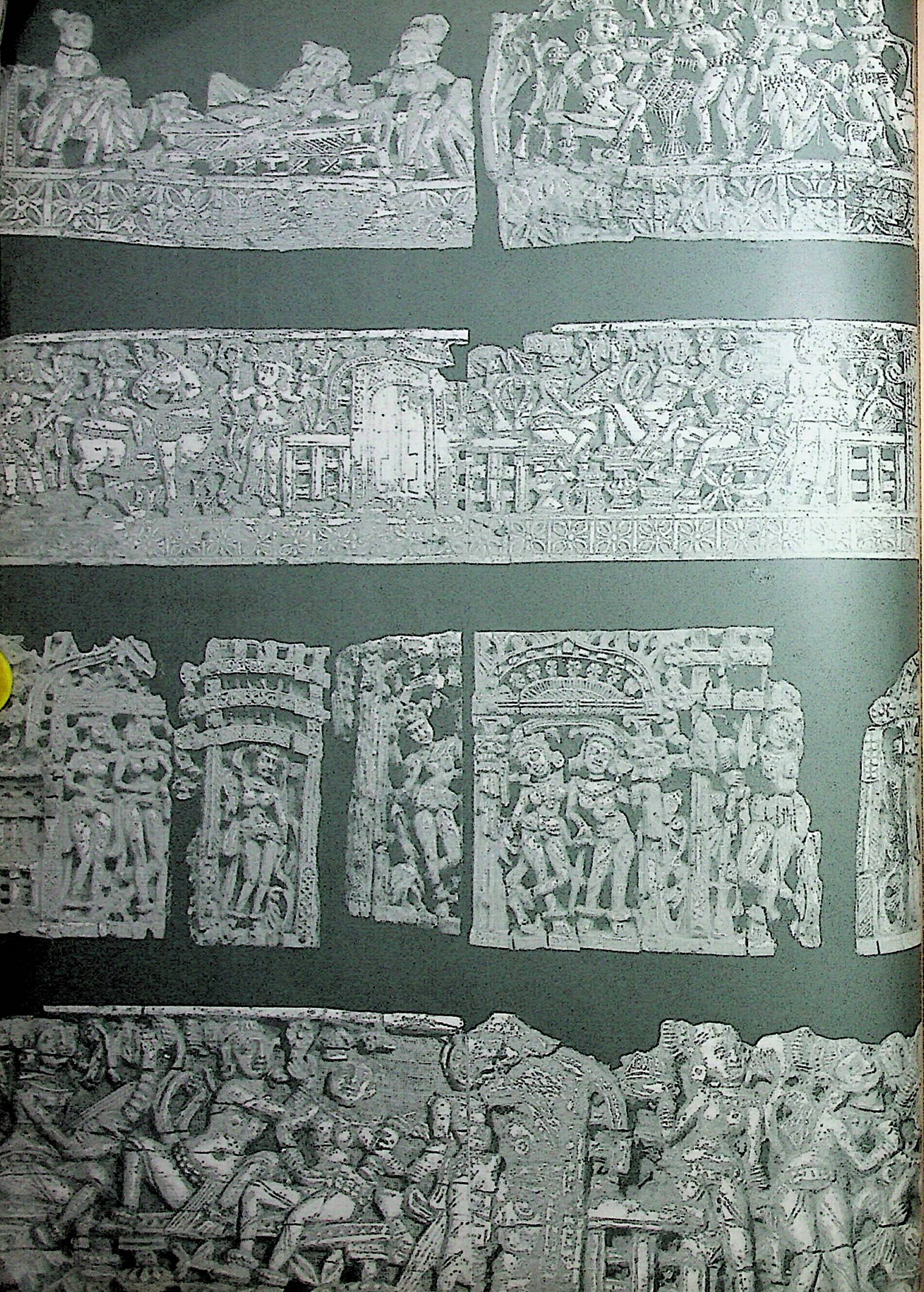


BEGRAM IVORIES AND INDIAN STONES

When Professor J. Hackin and Madame J.-R. Hackin published the preliminary reports on the magnificent Begram finds of 1937-39[1], the interest of scholars of Asian art was immediately turned to the discoveries made at this cosmopolitan cross-road in Afghanistan, where Chinese and Indian art objects mingled with works from the classic West. When *Nouvelles recherches archeologiques a Begram* appeared in two volumes (1954)[2], Western and Asian scholars were almost overwhelmed by the amount of material from the site; by its diversity and perhaps as much by the sumptuous publication and distinguished cast of contributors to the volumes. The text contained a thorough catalogue by J. Hackin; a chronological analysis and comparison of the ivories with Indian sculpture by Ph. Stern; stimulating studies on ancient Indian life by J. Auboyer; iconographical interpretations by A. Foucher; other enlightening contributions by V. Elisseef, R. Grousset, P. Hamelin, O. Kurz and J. Meunie.

The hoard encompassed objects in bronze, glass, plaster and lacquer, as well as the ivories. In general, they were placed from the end of the first century A.D. through the second century A.D.[3] Despite the importance of the finds, remarkably few critical attempts have been made to review the original findings. This acceptance by scholars is the more surprising since, in order to justify the date ascribed to the ivories, two hallowed Indian monuments—the facade of the Lomas Risi cave and the Didarganj yakshi—traditionally considered Maurya, were wrenched from that time and reassigned to the first century.[4] This study, which deals chiefly with the ivories, will consider whether this date is valid or whether the ivories belong, as we believe, to the first century B.C.

The heterogeneous nature of the hoard continues to be puzzling. Under what circumstances were so many choice and variegated objects assembled originally? Were they assembled at one time but produced at other times? These questions will not be answered satisfactorily until more concrete dates have been secured for the different groups of objects. If parts of the hoard prove to be later than the first century B.C., we would simply conclude either that the collection consisted of antiquities or that it was formed over a long period of time. If, on the contrary, some of the hoard proved to be earlier than the accepted date, our thesis happily would be corroborated.

One object from Begram appears to belong to the first century B.C., and at the same time fortunately carries evidence relating it to the ivories. This is a handsome pottery vessel, part human, part bird, with a lead glaze of aquamarine hue (Pl. 1).

This unique object, probably representing a *kinnari*, has the head and bust of a female whose hands are raised between her breasts and held in *anjali* pose. Her open mouth is the spout, her braided hair the handle. Until now this object has been attributed to the second century A.D. Because of the glaze, its Indian origin has been questioned.[5] We, however, are convinced that it is a product of India or Indian craftsmanship; that it should be dated considerably earlier than the second century A.D. i.e., first century B.C., that it is pivotal in clarifying the dates of the Begram ivories and many other Indian sculptures to which it and the ivories are related.

The pottery *kinnari* possesses an identifying feature marking it in time and place. That feature is an armlet consisting of a trefoil, much like a *fleur-de-lis*, attached to an encircling band. Armlets of this type appear on Indian sculptures but not later than the toranas of Sanchi I, i.e., middle of the first century B.C.[6] An extensive search in India has failed to uncover a single example of the trefoil armlet that can be dated justifiably later than those toranas. Apparently the design for some reason lost its popularity at that time.

For the distribution, variety and evolution of the trefoil motif see Fig. 1[7]. The earliest is on a guardian carved on the verandah of the vihara at Bhaja (Pl. 2, Fig. 1A)[8]. The petal-like shapes of this trefoil are broad and pebbled, a combination not found elsewhere. As the drawings demonstrate, variations of this basic motif appear on figures at Bharhut (Pl. 3, D-G)[9], Pitalkhora, (Pl. 4, I-J), Sanchi I (N)[10] and Sanchi II, Jaggayyapeta (L)[11], Bodhgaya (K)[12], and on many individual sculptures such as the Vidisa[13], Parkham[14] and Noh yakshas[15]. Interestingly, the only armlet with five "petals" is on the Patna yaksha (C)[16]. This is not the only instance of artistic freedom extended to the trefoil. For example, the couchant Queen Maya in a rondel on the Bharhut railing wears two slightly different armlets, the one on her left arm being more rectilinear (E), the one on her right more curvilinear (Pl. 5, D)[17].

We find the trefoil armlet on Sunga terracottas (M) and on many Mathura figures stylistically related to Bharhut and unquestionably of the second or first century B.C[18]. Clearly then, the trefoil armlet was a popular motif

during that time. While it was a very common ornament at Bharhut, it was rare at Sanchi I, where only two examples have been noticed. Exhaustive search has failed to turn up any later examples. It hardly seems conceivable that the Begram vessel with this ornament could have been fabricated at a later time. It must, therefore, be considered a product of the first century B.C., which is about a century and a half earlier than the conventional date accepted for the ivories. Here, then, is logical evidence of an earlier date for one of the Begram objects. This suggests that we should re-examine other portions of the hoard. We will now essay proof for the pre-Christian dating of the Begram ivories. Scrutiny of these ivories will reveal features linking them to the time when the trefoil armlet was popular.

Many of the ivories depict entrances, both toranas and chaitya doorways, often framing a single figure or a duet of alluring females (Pl. 6). These miniature architectural settings simulate building techniques employed for contemporaneous wood structures, since ravaged by time. But much is known about wood architecture, for it was duplicated with scrupulous detail by sculptors who executed the rock-hewn cave temples and reliefs on stupa railings.

The resemblance between these ivories and Indian architecture has been noted by Ph. Stern and B. Rowland ; the former, in fact, found it so striking that he revised some traditional dates in order to substantiate his attributions. For example, noting the similarity of the carvings on the entrance to the Lomas Risi cave (Pl. 7, Fig. 2a) and those on the ivories (Fig. 26), he discarded the accepted Maurya dating of the cave with the explanation that the entrance had been recut after the Christian era. The error of this argument will be demonstrated by examining the chaitya entrances sculptured before the Christian era. This architectural element occurs in cave temples in the Barabar Hills (Lomas Risi); at Bhaja, Kondane, Pitalkhora, Bhedsa, Nasik, and Junagarh; in reliefs on vedikas at Bharhut (Pl. 8, Fig. 3d), Bodhgaya (Pl. 9, Fig. 3c), Lalsot (Fig. 3g), Sanchi II, Sanchi I and Amaravati (Pl. 10), Khandagiri, Udayagiri, Orissa and on numerous stone sculptures from Mathura and other sites (Pl. 11).

These carvings reflect wooden prototypes. The technique employed in wood construction was to fasten planks by finials over a ridge pole. These planks were then bent over a series of horizontal beams to form an arch bolted at either side to supporting columns rising from the ground level to the roof. A problem inherent in this type of construction must have resulted from the tensive force of the bent roofing planks and their power to straighten as a bow does when an arrow is released. In order to counteract the strain and insure the stability of the structure, the columns were slanted inward. This is a feature of all early caves. In addition, all large-scale examples of the bentwood arch in cave temples show massive bolts locking the bentwood roof to upright columns. When the sculptor worked on a smaller scale, however, he sometimes omitted the bolts and slant of the columns.

Another feature of ancient cave architecture coexistent with the bolted chaitya arch is the half barrel-vault over the side aisles separated from the nave by simple octagonal columns. This formulation is characteristic of the oldest temples hollowed from living rock (e.g., Bhaja, Kondane, Pitalkhora and Bhedsa) and contemporary relief carvings in which chaityas are represented (e.g., Bharhut, Bodhgaya and Lalsot)[6].

A change appears on the toranas of Sanchi I. There, instead of the arch being bolted to the upright columns, the lower parts are held together by a tie-rod that stabilizes the structure by its own isometric pull. Slots were provided at the bottom ends of the bent planks and into each was fitted a crossbar with frontal projections (Pls. 12, 13, Fig. 3H). The same device is depicted on the Baba Pyaras Matha caves at Junagarh in Gujarat and an early relief from Ghantasala in Andhra Pradesh (Pl. 14). At Nasik and later cave temples, "musician" balconies on a larger scale served the same purpose. Vestigial and decorative remnants of the earlier construction appear at Karle, but there the uprights do not reach to the roof.

Concurrent with the advent of the tie-rod, was a structural change in the roof over the side aisles, the half barrel-vault being replaced by a flat roof. The innovation of the tie-rod also affected the columns that formerly were made to lean against the pull of the bentwood bow-like arch. Freed of this function, they could act as erect, free-standing members. Coincidentally they acquired embellishing capitals and bases. The Nasik chaitya shows architecture at the moment of transition. There, side aisles maintain the traditional half barrel-vault but the large chaitya arch rests on a strong horizontal member that in wood architecture would have functioned as a tie-rod. The front columns are round, only imperceptibly slanted, and each is provided with a pot base and a square abacus. The same features appear on a vedika pillar at Lalsot[20].

The Begram ivories show both types of chaitya entrances, the bolted bentwood arch and the tie-rod arch. The bolted bentwood arch is shown in Pls. 6 and 15, the tie-rod arch construction in Pls. 16 and 17. The existence of both types at Begram does not indicate a difference in date but, most probably, a time of transition. There is no perceptible variation in the style of the female figures within the different types of archways. Significantly, in at least one instance (Find 34), the exterior panel depicts the tie-rod arch[21], while the interior panel depicts the bolted bentwood arch[22]. We maintain, therefore, that the Begram ivory carvers used both types of arch concurrently. Traditional craftsmen perpetuate ancient forms while at the same time innovators adopt the new. The combination of both arches on the ivories points to a period in flux, probably coeval with the appearance of the tie-rod on Sanchi I as no example of the ancient type seems to post-date Sanchi I[23].

Another motif, which we will call the overlapping rosette, corroborates our thesis. This is a decorative motif applied often to architecture and jewellery during the period preceding the time of Sanchi I. We have found it on the sculptures of Bharhut[24], Sanchi II[25], Bodhgaya[26], Amaravati (early phase)[27], and on numerous sculptures from Mathura[28] (Pls. 18-20, *cf.* Fig. 4). The design may be described basically as a rosette, probably representing a lotus,

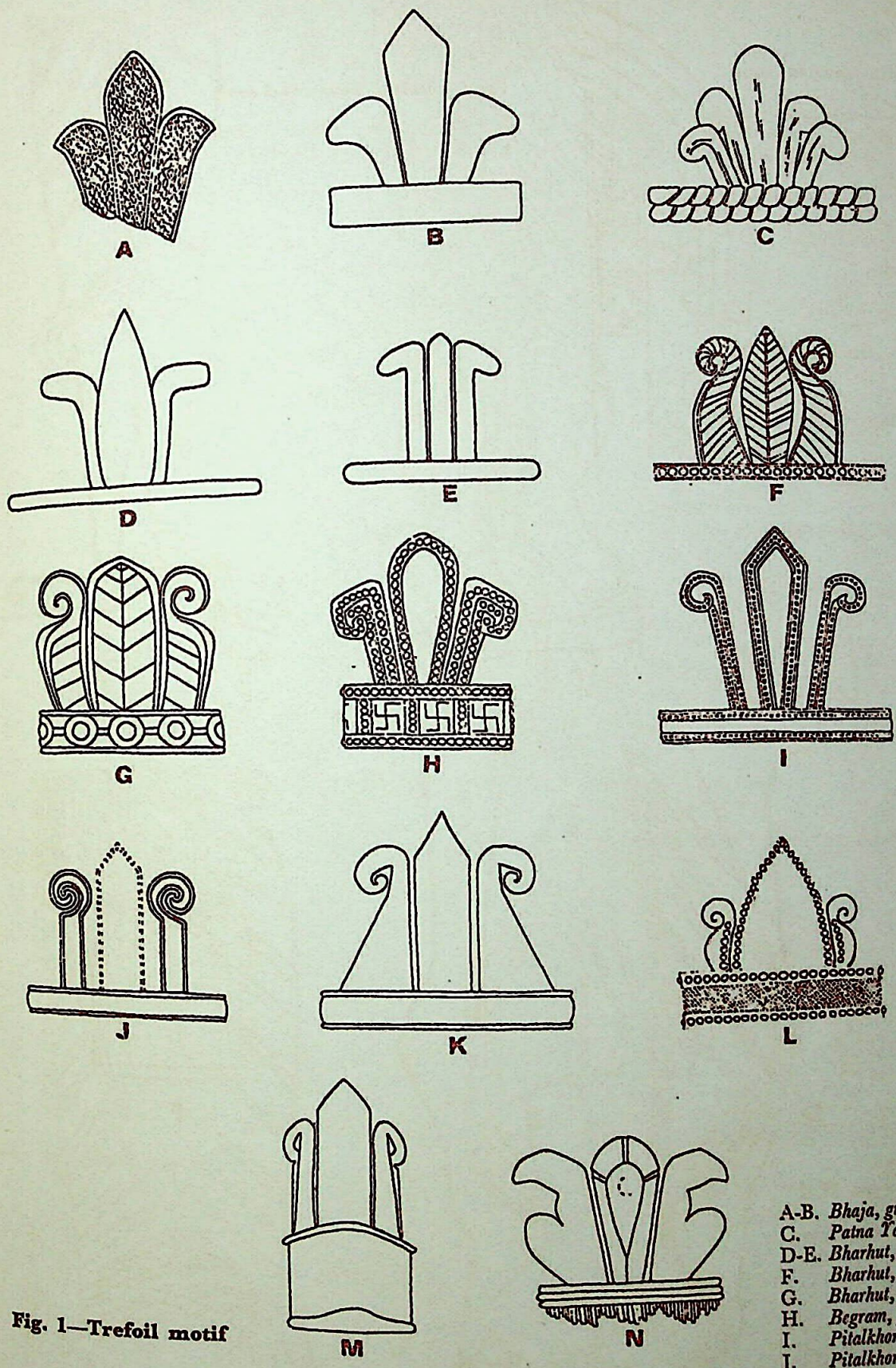


Fig. 1—Trefoil motif

A-B. *Bhaja, guardians, vihara entrance*
C. *Patna Yaksha*
D-E. *Bharhut, "Dream" of Queen Maya*
F. *Bharhut, equestrian*
G. *Bharhut, Kubera*
H. *Begram, pottery "kinnari"*
I. *Pitalkhora, Yaksha*
J. *Pitalkhora, dwarf Yaksha*
K. *Bodhgaya, Yakshi*
L. *Jaggayyapeta, Chakravartin*
M. *Basarh Terracotta*
N. *Sanchi I, Yaksha*

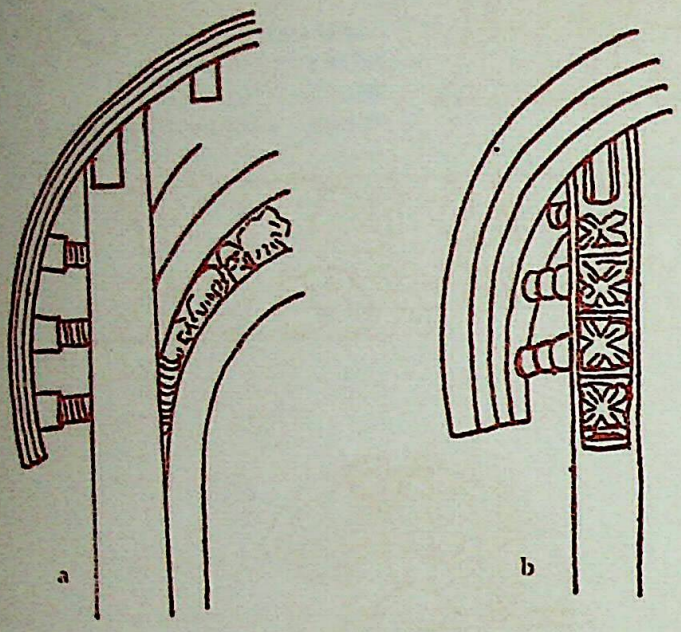
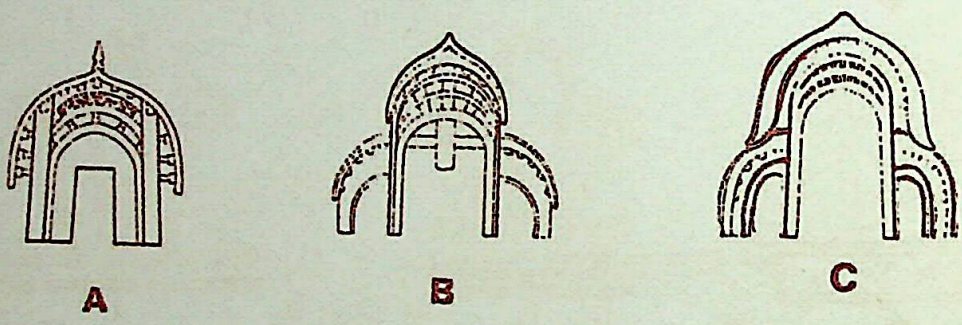


Fig. 2—Bolted bentwood arch

a. *Facade, Lomas Risi cave, Barabar Hills*
b. *Begram ivory (cf. Pls. 6, 15)*



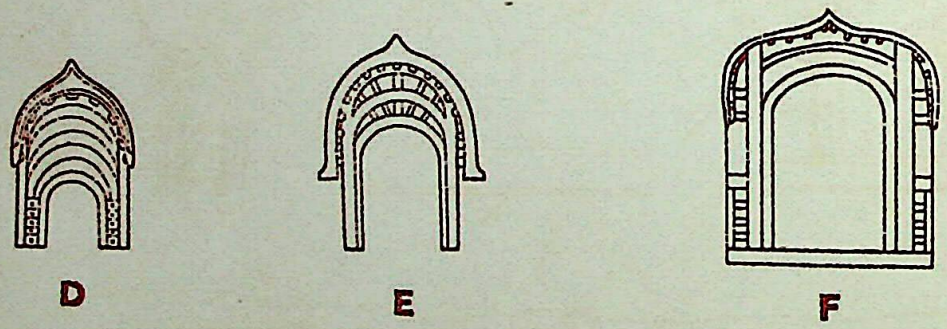
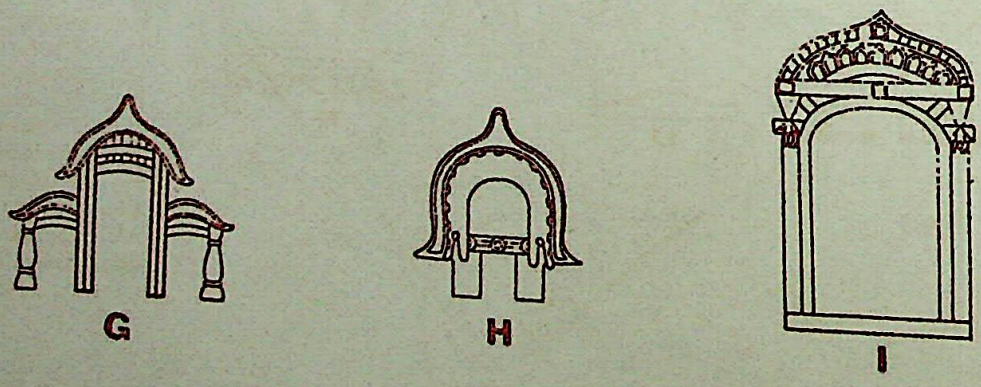


Fig. 3—Bentwood arches
early type A-G; tie-rod type H, I

A. *Lomas Risi facade*
B. *Bharhut*
C. *Bodhgaya*
D. *Bharhut*
E. *Bodhgaya*
F. *Begram*
G. *Lalsot*
H. *Sanchi I*
I. *Begram*



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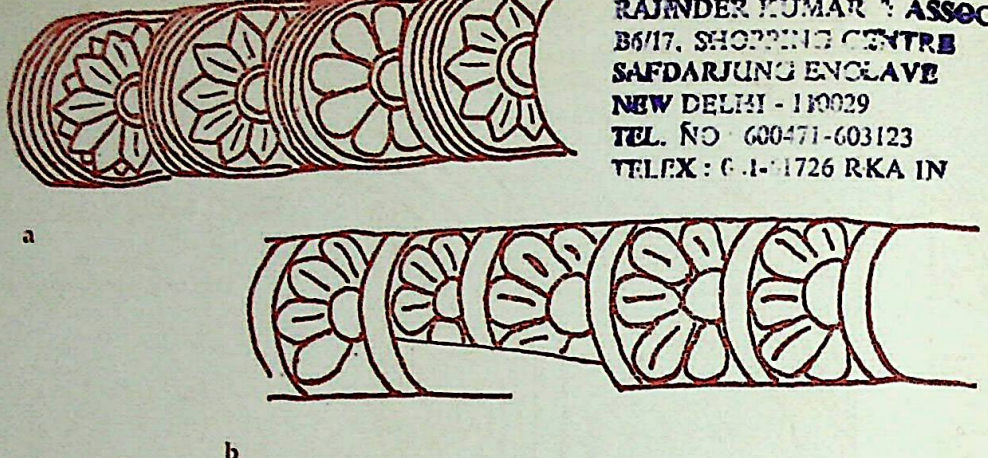


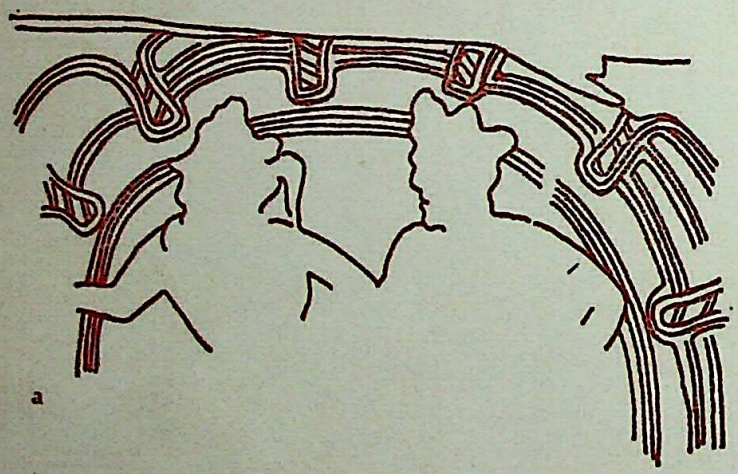
a

b

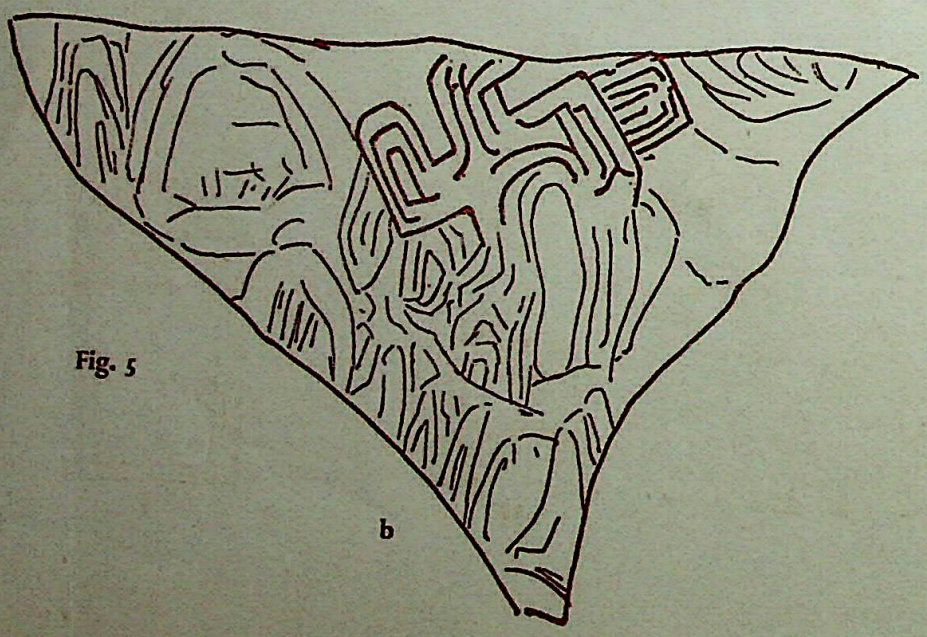
c

d

Fig. 4



a



b

Fig. 5

a

Fig. 6

Fig. 4—Overlapping rosette motif

a. *Bodhgaya (from Coomaraswamy,* Bodhgaya, *Pl. II)*
b. *Begram ivory (from* Nouvelles recherches, *Fig. 95)*
c. *Bharhut (from Coomaraswamy,* Bharhut, *Pl. IX. Fig. 27)*
d. *Sanchi, Stupa II, S.E. sector of ground balustrade, outer face*

Fig. 5—Stylized rocks

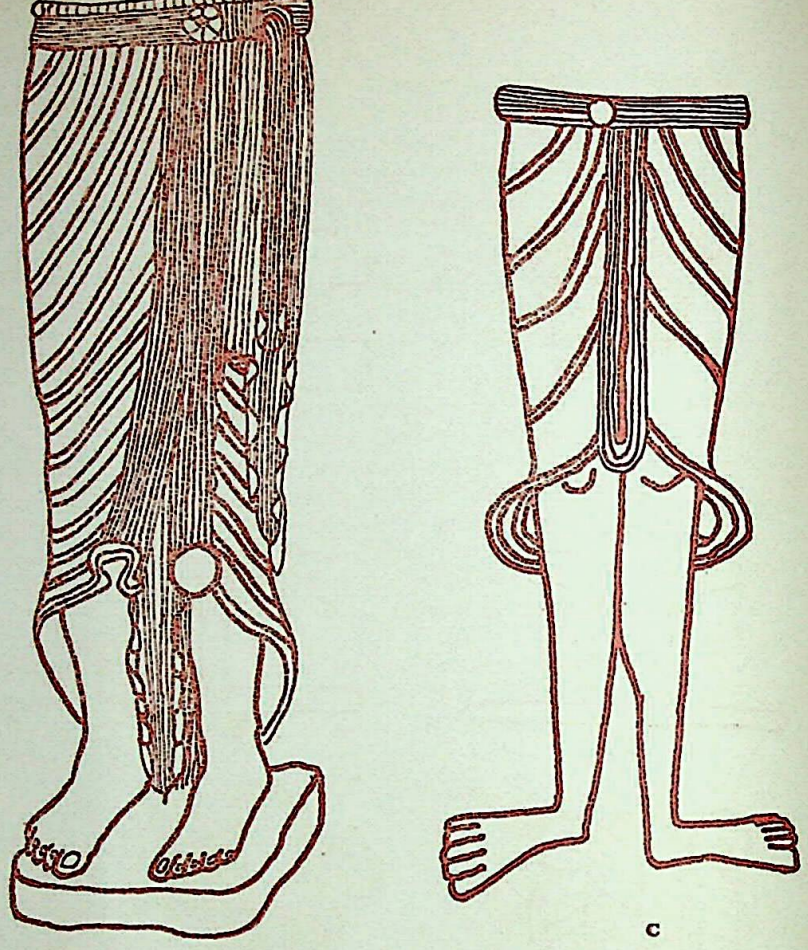
a. *From hunting scene on Begram ivory chair (cf. Pl. 21)*
b. *From landscape scene on back wall of verandah, upper storey of main wing, Rani Gumpha (Cave 1), Udayagiri*

Fig. 6—Inhabited vine

a. *Begram, coffer no. 9 (cf. Pl. 22)*
b. *Mihintale stele, Kantaka Stupa*

Fig. 7—An early drapery formula

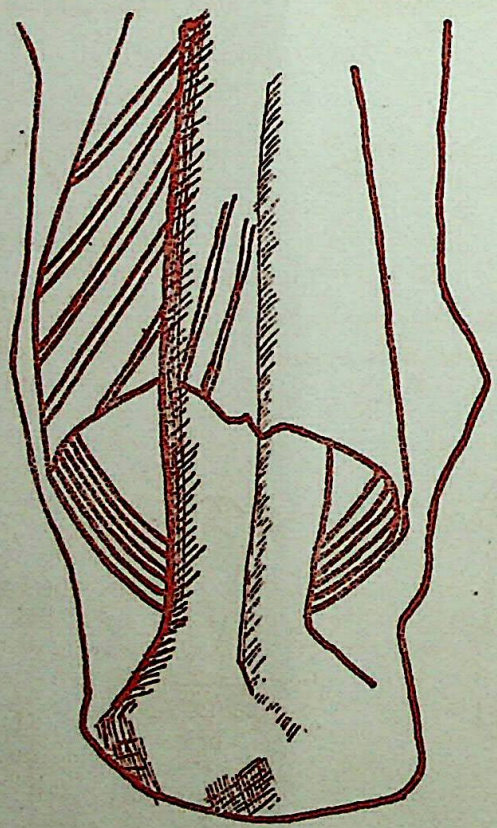
a. *Yaksha, Amaravati*
b. *Chakravartin slab, Jaggayyapeta*
c. *Terracotta, Taxila*
d. *Patna Yaksha*



a c

Fig. 7

b



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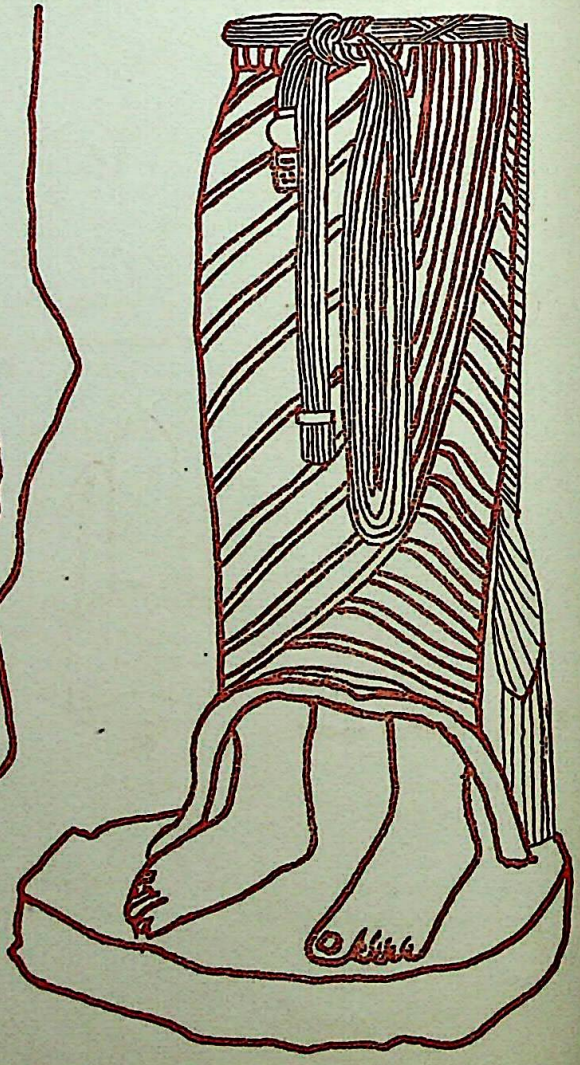


joined at either side by a horizontal band of repeated half rosettes. This rather uncomplicated motif disappeared after 50 B.C., although one would have expected it to have persisted because of its ingenuous simplicity[29]. A single but unmistakable example of the overlapping rosette was found on a Begram ivory (Fig. 4b)[30]. The unique occurrence of this motif among the mass of ivories in the hoard points to a period when the rosettes were disappearing, i.e., *c.* 50 B.C. The same time saw the last of the trefoil ornament and the inception of the tie-rod arch at Sanchi.

More puzzling from a stylistic viewpoint is an ivory chair of thronely beauty. This seat is composed of numerous segments richly and variously ornamented. Of particular interest is the great difference between the boldly engraved hunting scenes on the uppermost horizontal registers (Pl. 21)[31] and the subtly modelled females posturing in the archways[32]. The difference is so great that, if we did not know that the hunting panels were an integral part of the chair, we would have difficulty in seeing any relationship between them and the other components. It would appear that the culture that produced the ivories allowed great latitude in both technique and style.

Coursing through the hunting scenes, adding vigor to the action, are bands of parallel and erratically undulating lines. In addition to enlivening the action, the lines serve to abstract and define the hills, rocks and caves sheltering the protagonists (Fig. 5a). A quick glance at the conventionalized forms described by the lines conjures up the mountain ranges in Chinese art of the Han dynasty; but, actually, they are similar to the scarcely noticed landscape vignettes carved in relief at Sanchi I [33] and in the Rani Gumpha (Cave 1) at Udayagiri (Fig. 5b)[37]. Thus we have another stylistic connection between the Begram ivories and India at the time of Sanchi I.

Another ivory is more difficult to date. This is an exquisite coffer (Pl. 22)[35] whose cover is adorned with female figures even more exotic and voluptuous than the sensuous women depicted on the throne discussed above. Framing the pictorial scene on the rectangular cover is a decorative border of extraordinary beauty. Between a narrow band of bead and reel marking the outer edge and an inner band of running swastikas, a vine with stem, leaves and tendrils vigorously loops itself into a series of medallions, in each a water fowl or cluster of flowers. This miraculous vine turns the corners in expert and fanciful manner, each corner being defined by grylli or composites of human and animal heads, a motif adapted from the classic West. The vine issues from the mouth of the human head in typical Indian fashion and from the head issues the proton of a horse or lion and these are inextricably combined with parts of elephant, bird and makara, in effect a Boschian kind of griffin. Grylli of this type—specifically those composed of human head, horse proton and bird—had an established tradition in Hellenistic art. The closest parallels to the Begram grylli, unfortunately, have been labeled Graeco-Roman, an assignment of period too imprecise to be relevant to our coffer.

Because of the supremely sophisticated delineation of the figures on the coffer, it has been allocated to the second century A.D. or later. A more substantial reason has been proffered by Professor O. Kurz who pointed out the resemblance between the inhabited vine in the border of the cover and a vine depicted on a house of about A.D. 60 at Pompeii[36]. Professor Kurz is correct, doubtless, in his analysis of the motif, but we question his view that the Begram vine was derived from Roman sources of the late first century. The inhabited vine, or creepers had its own tradition in India and we can trace it at least as far back as the second century B.C.—to Bharhut[37] and Sanchi II.

Yet, there are features that unquestionably relate to both the Begram and Roman vines. These are what Kurz describes as acanthus leaves, seen from profile, stems, and tendrils that lock together the loops of the rinceau. To suggest that the Pompeian vine was derived from India may be heresy but we know that trade between Rome and India was carried on extensively from the first century B.C. through the Imperial period. Petronius, for example, mentions Indian ivories, and the Indian figure found at Pompeii corroborates his observation[39]. A cosmopolitan center like Rome could borrow and adapt artistic ideas as well as export them. With this in mind we note that the vine on the coffer has one element that is missing in the Roman versions, one that is assuredly of Indian origin. We refer to the manner in which the stem of the vine issues unnaturally from the arched "acanthus" leaf, hooks into the open space of the medallion, then forms a calyx or leaf from which sprout flowers, pods and fruits (Fig. 6a). The calyxes on the lotus stalks meandering over the Bharhut copings are also miraculously abundant but these give forth jewels, mangoes and auspicious symbols in measured cadence. At Amaravati, during what Stern calls the "First Period", an inflorescence issues in ebullient profusion from a miniature pot-like calyx[40]. Moreover, the use of space in the rinceau of Bharhut, the coffer and other Begram ivories (*cf. Nouvelles recherches*, Figs. 539, 547) is radically different at Amaravati during that period.

While the same specific type of inhabited vine represented on the coffer—particularly one with such prominent acanthus-like leaves enclosing the medallions—has not been seen in India, we have found it in Ceylon on a stele beside the Kantaka stupa at Mihintale, the dating of which, unfortunately, has not yet been documented (Fig. 6b)[41]. Mihintale, however, is the oldest Buddhist establishment in Ceylon, the place to which the Dharma was carried miraculously through the air from India, and where Kutakanna Tissa (44-22 B.C.), it is reported, erected a stupa.

The style of carving on the Mihintale stelae is so very much like that on some Indian sculptures of the late second or early first century B.C., that there should be no question of date, certainly there would be none if the Mihintale stones had been discovered on Indian soil. The vine and its inhabitants—floral, animal or human—are worked essentially in silhouette on a plane slightly higher than the smooth, bare ground. This description also applies to the earliest work at Amaravati[42] (i.e., before Stern's "First Period"), that has been dated first century A.D. by Douglas Barrett[43]. H. Sarkar and A. Ghosh[44], however, have satisfactorily demonstrated that the distinctive style of that area was

firmly established by the beginning of the first century B.C. There is no reason, therefore, to believe that the Mihintale stelae are later. Indeed, if the Ceylonese craftsmen imitated Indian sculpture they probably would have employed the most current innovations. It is improbable that they were interested in copying the antique art forms of their neighbours across the sea. In any event, Mihintale offers evidence of Indian priority for the type of inhabited vine found at Begram, a priority going back before the Christian era. The Mihintale vine permits us to consider the Begram coffer as possible pre-Christian. As a lone piece of evidence, however, it would not constitute proof of date. In fact, this coffer, perhaps the most exquisite of all the Begram ivories, is the most elusive and it poses unique problems.

The seductive females on the coffer cover have evoked comparisons with Mathura and Amaravati. But their elegant, sensuous grace and beauty relate more nearly to those of Amaravati than to the great fertile, peasant bodies of the Mathura coquettes from Bhutesar (Pl. 23) to which they have been compared. Are these physical differences merely superficial? Do they tell more than just a traditional attitude toward the female sex? We prefer to be guided by specifics. The coiled hair, while extended from the neck of the women on the coffer[45], is essentially the same hair style seen on the *vedikas* of Bharhut[46] and Bodhgaya (Pl. 9) and also on the Didarganj *chauri*-bearer which we will discuss at length. A bow on the heads on this and other ivories (Pl. 24) is again shown on a Sunga terracotta (Pl. 25). But, if we attempt to use these details to assign a date to the coffer before the efflorescence of art at Amaravati in the second century A.D., we must account for a stylistic contradiction between the coffer figures and the Begram ivories already discussed.

We have seen that styles at Begram can be radically different even on the same object, the chair with figures and hunting scenes, for instance. When we consider that most, if not all of the Begram ivories are secular, it is not surprising that there are major stylistic differences between them and stone carvings on religious monuments. The difference of material should also be taken into account. Ivory certainly was more precious than stone, and work in that material probably was commissioned by persons of royalty and entrusted to the finest craftsmen of their court. Furthermore, the high degree of linear perfection achieved on the best of the engravings, such as the cover of the coffer, may mirror a school of painting, examples of which are no longer extant for comparison. Traces of red and black reveal that the ivories themselves were painted, in part at least. To produce conclusive proof of an early date for the chest may not be possible, but comparison between the Didarganj yakshi and some of the figures on the coffer may be worthwhile.

The Didarganj yakshi (Pls. 26, 27), long considered to be Maurya by most scholars, was re-dated to the first century A.D. by Stern as a corollary to his dating of the ivories[47]. The problems revolving around this sculpture are illuminating and a thorough analysis of this sculpture is essential because of its acknowledged relationship to the Begram ivories. The Maurya date was based initially on the fact that it was found near the Asoka capital at Patna and because the stone has the shining "Maurya polish". Stern based his own date on four criteria: (1) the type of bun or bangs worn on the yakshi's forehead, which he called "la grosse coque ou bouffant de cheveux"; (2) the type of long-beaded necklace; (3) the drapery style; (4) the type of heavy anklets. He did not mention her earrings, a cylinder type hanging vertically, often seen on second-century A.D. sculptures.

First, we shall consider the hair style, specifically the arrangement of a bun or bangs over the forehead, in order to show why it does not qualify as a criterion for dating. According to Stern "la grosse coque ou bouffant de cheveux" on the Didarganj yakshi is like those on the Bhutesar[48] and other Mathura yakshis typical of the second century A.D. (Pl. 23). But the buns on carvings of that century are flat and spread over a large area of the head while the bun on the resplendent *chauri*-bearing yakshi is small, puffed and falls well below her hairline.

Stern also pointed to an example of the bun at Sanchi I, believing it to be unique in pre-Kushan art[49]. But we have found other early examples, one on a yakshi from Mathura that is not later than the beginning of the first century B.C. and certainly one of the most beguiling females of Sunga art (Pls. 19, 20). Attesting to this date is the type of column against which this yakshi stands while coyly adjusting her sash. More significant testimony is the decoration of overlapping rosettes on one of her numerous necklaces, a motif that indicates, as mentioned above, a date prior to Sanchi I.

Another Sunga example of the bun appears on a terracotta where it is partly hidden by a horizontal band of three pearl-like strands and barely noticed because of the huge tasselled jewel spreading over the broad forehead (Pl. 28)[50]. This finely crafted terracotta probably reveals what is often covered by snoods depicted on many other early heads. Moreover, both kinds of buns we have described appear on a single stone relief known as the Amohini Ayagapata[51]. The large flat type of the Kushan yakshis is on the badly worn central deity; the small puffed type of the Didarganj and Sunga yakshis is on the figure standing to the right of the goddess and holding an umbrella. The date of this slab, based on an enigmatic inscription, is in dispute, but cannot be later than 14-15 A.D.[52]. Interpretations of the inscription permit readings equivalent to 16 B.C., 57 B.C., or earlier. Whichever is correct, the stele informs us that both kinds of bun co-existed.

This takes us back to Begram and the pottery *kinnari* which we dated in the first half of the first century B.C. by virtue of the trefoil armlet. The *kinnari* also has a bun on its forehead (Pl. 1). We have shown that this hair style appears on sculptures made in India over a long period of time, spanning at least 300 years. Thus the bun, a primary criterion used by Stern for assigning a Kushan date to the ivories, is eliminated as a factor in establishing a precise chronology.

We have noticed another feature common to the Begram ivories and the Indian objects that have been associated with them, that is, the cylinder or tube-shaped earring

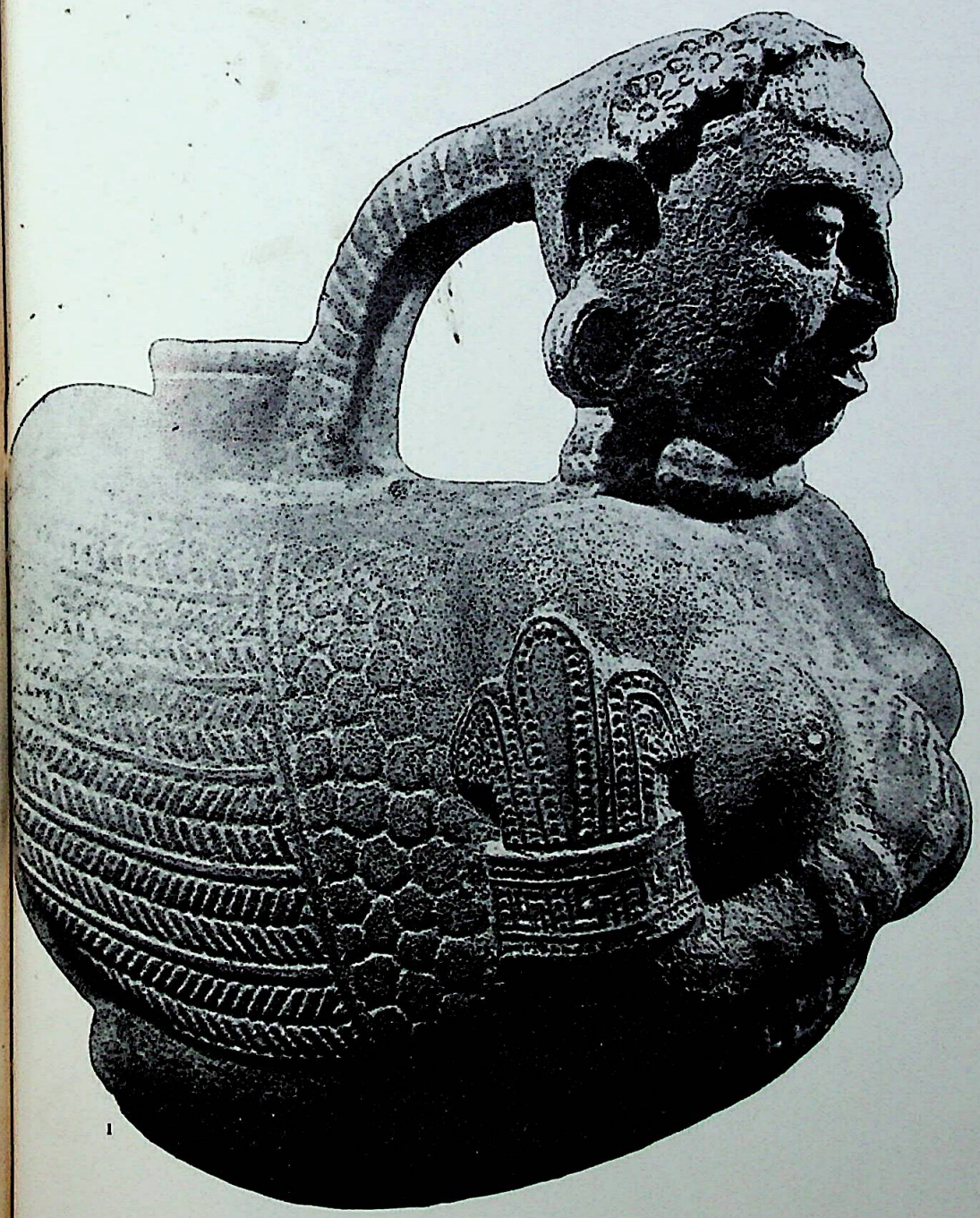
(*Continued on p. 49*)

1. *"Kinnari", pottery, acquamarine lead glaze. Begram hoard, Kabul Museum, Kabul. Photo John C. Huntington.*

2. *Guardian, vihara entrance, Bhaja caves. Photo courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.*

3. *Equestrian, Bharhut vedika. Indian Museum, Calcutta. Photo courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.*

4. *Yaksha, Pitalkhora. Author's photo.*



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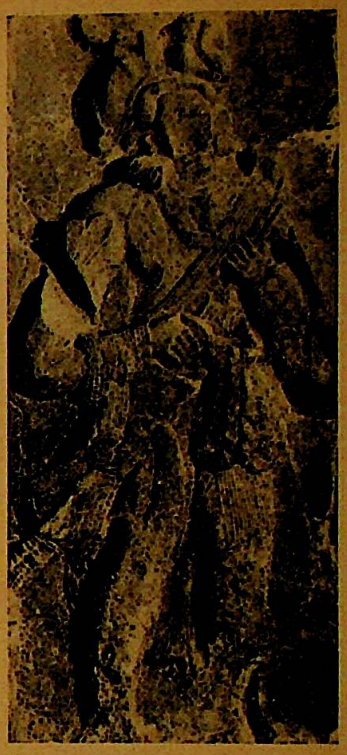

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5. *"Dream" of Maya, Bharhut vedika. Indian Museum, Calcutta. Photo courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.*

6. *Women standing in a chaitya-arched entrance, detail, ivory, Begram. Kabul Museum, Kabul. Photo John C. Huntington.*

7. *Facade of Lomas Risi cave. Author's photo.*

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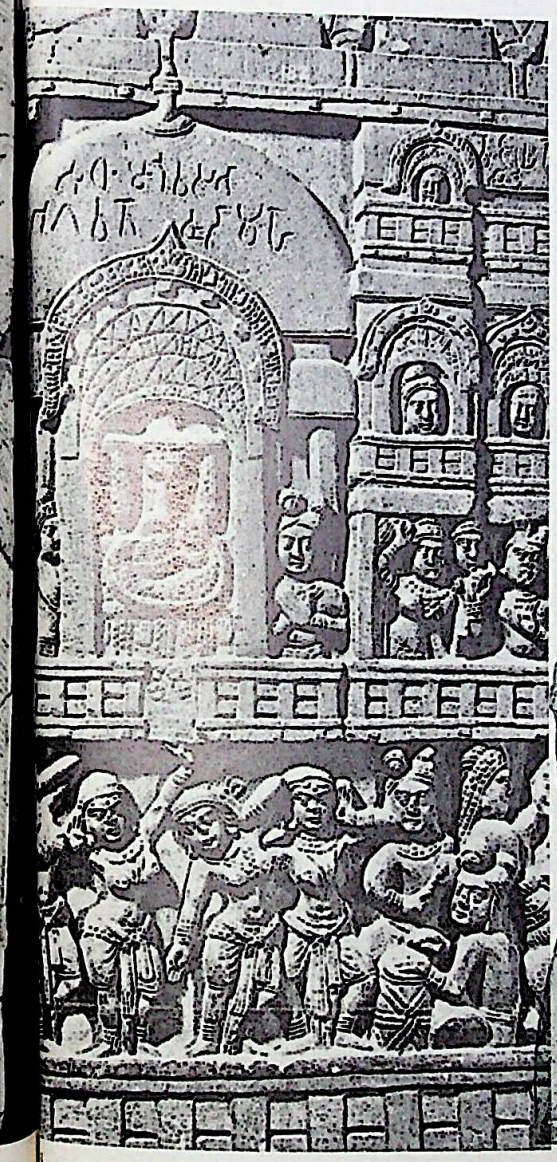
8. *Temple of the Turban, Bharhut vedika. Indian Museum, Calcutta. Photo courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.*

9. *Worship of the Dharmachakra, Bodhgaya vedika pillar, Bodhgaya. Author's photo.*

10. *Scenes from the life of the Buddha, first face of four-sided stele, Amaravati. Amaravati Museum. Photo courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.*

11. *Yakshi, vedika pillar from Kausambi, State Museum, Lucknow. Photo courtesy State Museum, Lucknow.*

12. *Tie-rod arch, Sanchi I (east torana, north pillar front face, 5th panel from top). Author's photo.*



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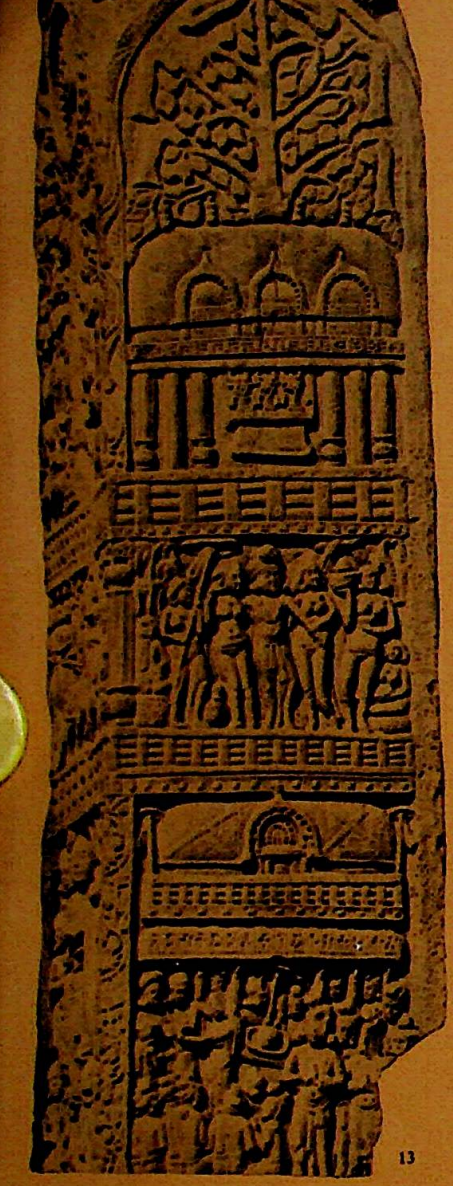

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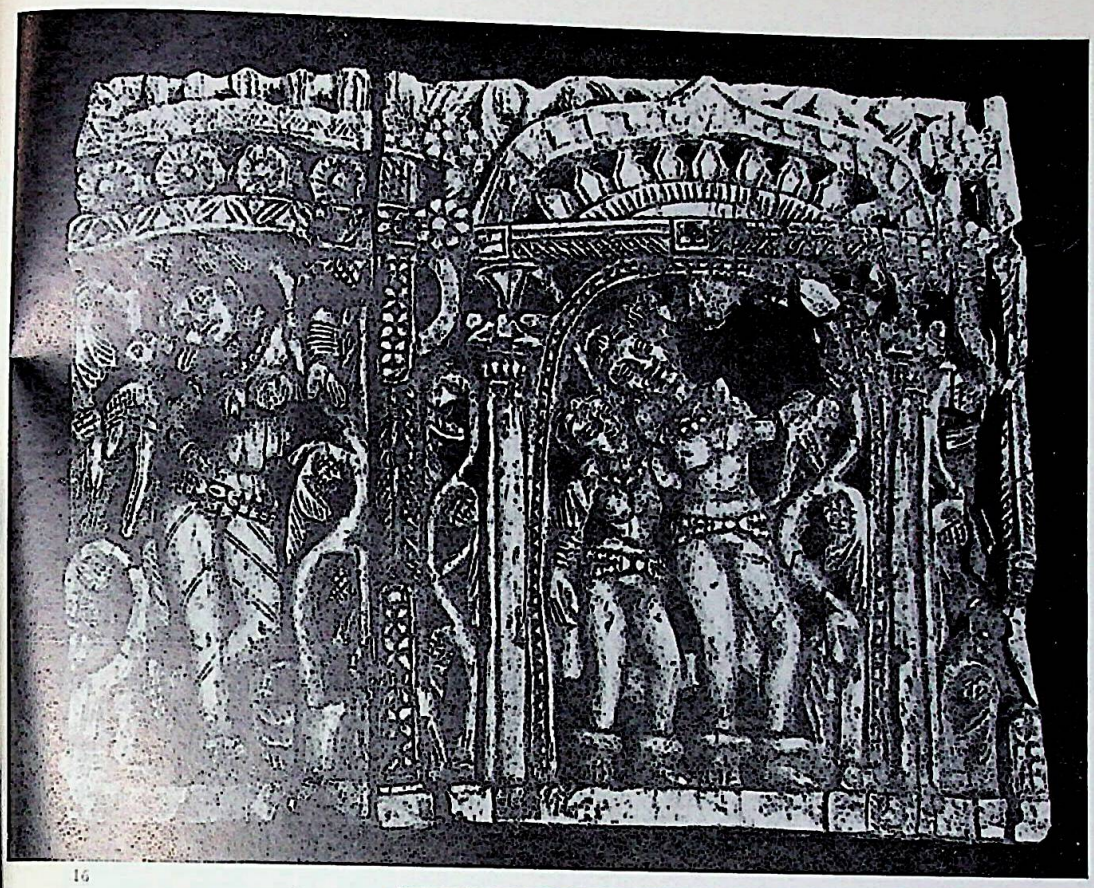
13. *Tie-rod arches, Sanchi I (south torana, west pillar, east face). Author's photo.*

14. *Tie-rod arch, detail on casing slab from Ghantasala, Andhra Pradesh. Musee Guimet. Author's photo.*

15. *Two women standing under early type bentwood arch, ivory, Begram. Kabul Museum, Kabul. Photo John C. Huntington.*

16. *Women standing under tie-rod type arch, ivory, Begram. Kabul Museum, Kabul. Photo John C. Huntington.*



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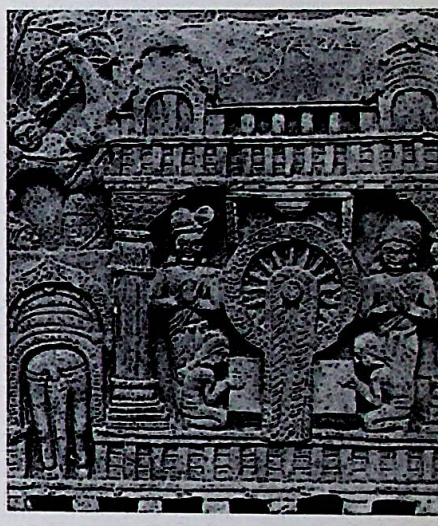

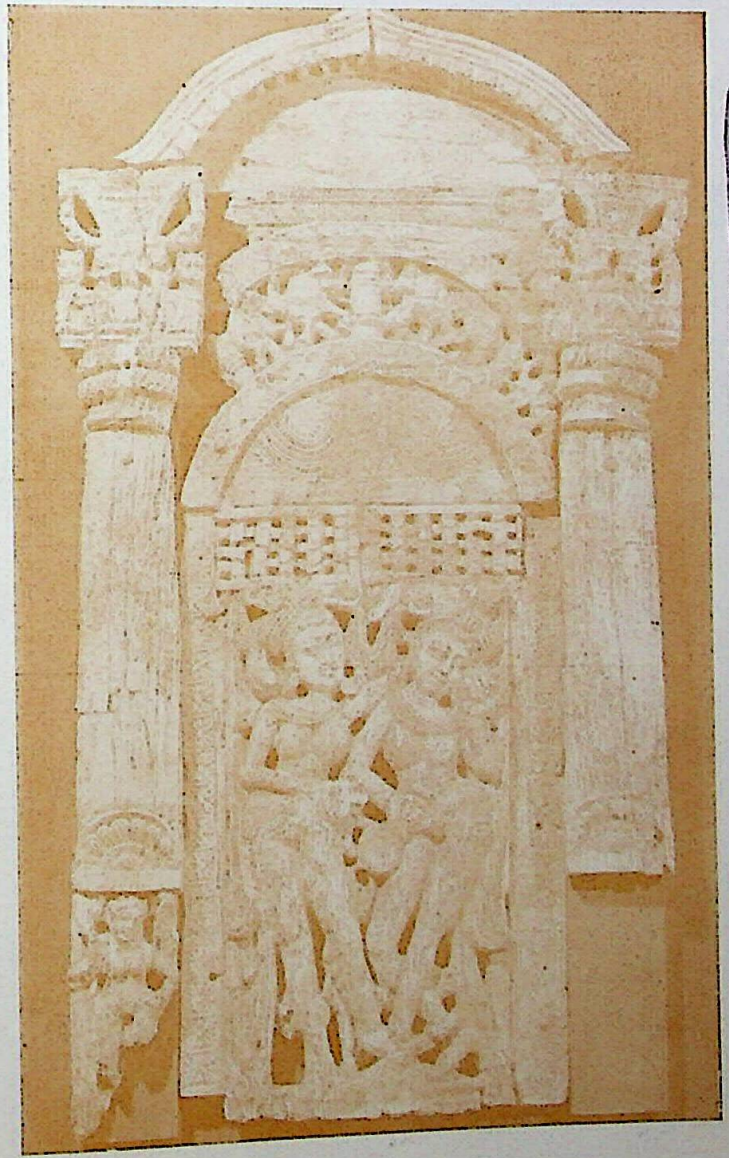

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17. *Women standing under tie-rod type arch, ivory, Begram. Kabul Museum, Kabul. Photo John C. Huntington.*

18. *Worship of the Dharmachakra, Bharhut vedika. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Photo courtesy Freer Gallery of Art.*

19. *Yakshi, Bhutesar vedika. Archaeological Museum, Mathura. Photo courtesy Archaeological Museum, Mathura.*

20. *Head, detail of Pl. 19 showing overlapping rosette necklace. Photo courtesy Archaeological Museum, Mathura.*

21. *Hunting scene, segment from a throne, ivory, Begram. Kabul Museum, Kabul. Photo John C. Huntington.*

22. *Coffer cover, ivory, Begram. Kabul Museum, Kabul. Photo John C. Huntington.*

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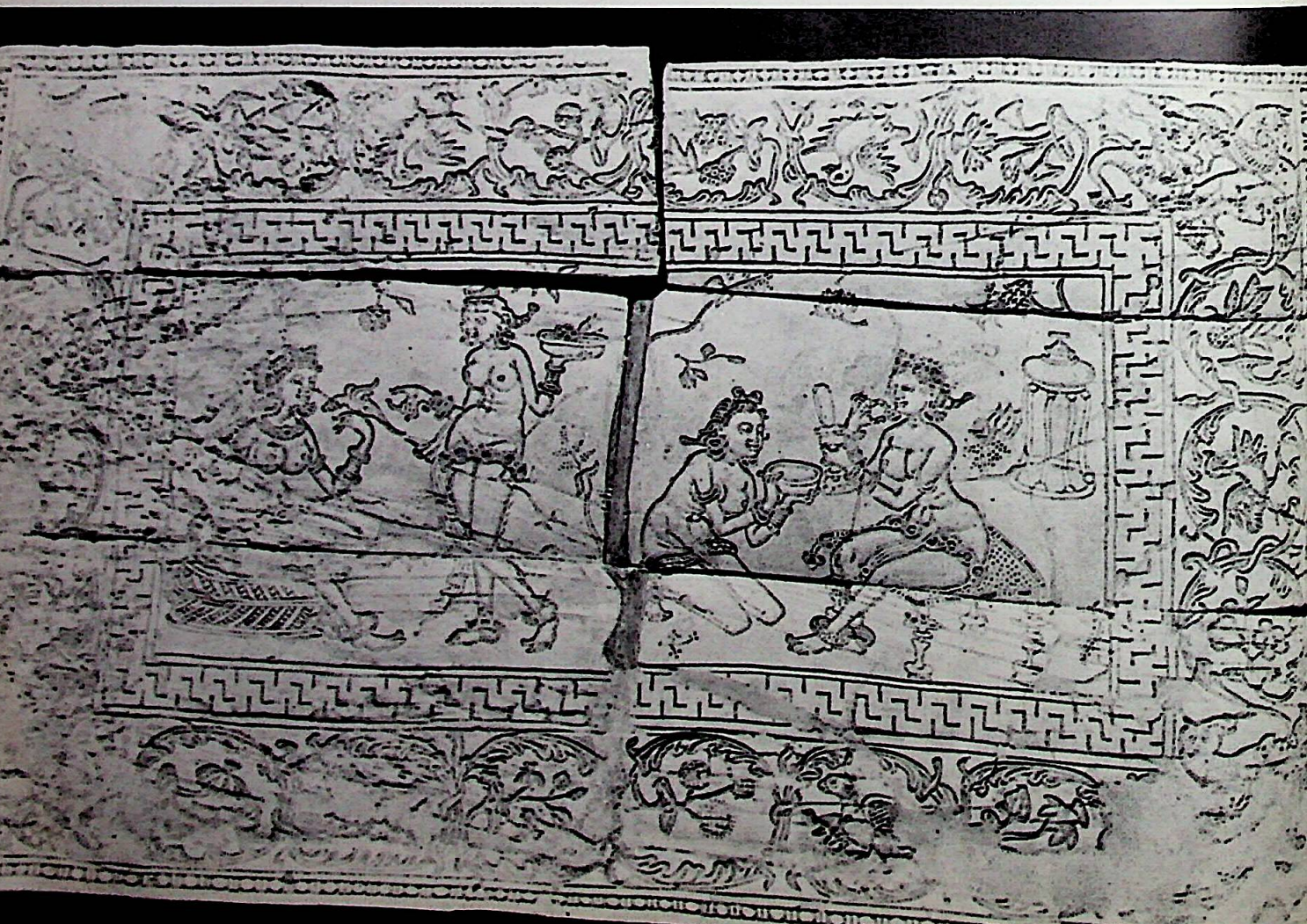

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23. *Yakshi, Bhutesar vedika. Archaeological Museum, Mathura. Photo courtesy Archaeological Museum, Mathura.*

24. *Women with bows in their hair, ivory, Begram. Kabul Museum, Kabul. Photo John C. Huntington.*

25. *Mithuna, terracotta, provenance unknown. Lucknow Museum, Lucknow. Photo courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.*

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26. *Didarganj Yakshi, front view, polished stone. Patna Museum, Patna. Photo courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.*

27. *Didarganj Yakshi, back view. Photo John C. Huntington.*

28. *Head, terracotta fragment, Chandraketugarh, 24-Parganas, Bengal. Asutosh Museum, Calcutta University. Photo courtesy Asutosh Museum.*

29. *Woman arranging her hair, ivory, Begram. Kabul Museum. Kabul. Photo John C. Huntington.*

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or ear plug. This type adorns many of the ivory figures as well as the Didarganj *chauri*-bearer and numerous Kushan yakshis from the Mathura area. While rarely seen on figures of the pre-Christian era, they are found on the toranas of Sanchi III, *c.* 25 B.C.[53]. The appearance of this earring type over so broad a period, like the bun, precludes its use as a device for dating within narrow periods.

Positive evidence for an early dating of the Didarganj figure is implicit in the treatment of the drapery, particularly in the use of the double parallel lines for defining the folds of the garment that hangs from the yakshi's massive hips and is secured in front by being folded over a linked cincture. The technical aspect of these folds was marked by Stern and he likened it, rightly, to the method of rendering drapery on the Begram figures (Pls. 6, 15, 29)[54]. He added that the same technique was employed at Mathura, but gave no examples. We have been unable to find any. On the contrary, we have found great differences. The quality of drapery on the Kushan-Mathura figures is soft, diaphanous, and totally revealing. Drapery on the Didarganj figure, while showing parts of the buttocks and the *mons veneris* is essentially opaque, voluminous and heavy, as it is on sculptures from Bodhgaya (Pl. 9)[55], Khandagiri-Udayagiri[56], Sanchi II[57] and some at Bharhut[58]. Garments of denuding transparency are certainly evident on the ivories and figures from Bharhut, Sanchi and other sites, but their presence is often marked by the double fold lacking in Mathura. It is on the Mathura yakshis of the second century A.D. that the body is completely revealed, the most sensuous of these being the enchantresses on the Bhutesar *vedika*[59]. Heavy drapery and what has been called "the absence of nudity" in Indian art is primarily a pre-Christian characteristic, while nudity has been perennial since the Indus Valley culture.

Drapery rendered with the double-lined fold is characteristic of other sculptures retaining traces of "Maurya polish". For example, the drapery on the two Patna yakshas (now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta) and on the Didarganj yakshi is so similar technically that all three stones might have come from the same workshop. Moreover, on the back of the Patna yakshas, above the waistline and at either side of the spine, there is a small dimple just as there is on the Didarganj yakshi. Thus we have another connecting link between these two massive male figures and the female deity.

We have already noted a variation of the trefoil armlet on one of the Patna yakshas. The early date indicated by that "trefoil" is reaffirmed by comparing these yakshas to other sculptures where the same unusual drapery formula is applied to the bottom of the dhoti. While that garment may be draped differently, may fall to the ground or only part of the way, in each case it curves distinctly upward in front (Fig. 7). On the Patna figures (d), for instance, it arches above the feet but on the Chakravartin slab from Jaggayyapeta (b) the bottom lines of the dhotis on the Prince and Prime Minister swing above the thighs in a movement away from the body and toward the back of the knees. This remarkable convention was employed elsewhere, on figures, for example, from Taxila (c)[60], the early phase at Amaravati (a)[61] and on Sunga terracottas (Pl. 25), but all were executed at least before 50 B.C.

Another clue to dating is provided by the Patna yakshas and the figures on the Chakravartin slab in that each wears a bulky sash tied in a heavy knot, substantial enough support for the dhoti. Similarly secured are the dhotis of the guardians on the verandah of the Bhaja vihara and those monumental deities, the Parkham, Vidisa and Noh yakshas. In contrast to these older sculptures, the "Friar Bala" type of bodhisattva, which is roughly contemporary with the Bhutesar yakshis, is more neatly girdled by a flat, ribbon-like sash with a chic knot[62]. The sash on the Didarganj yakshi also acts as a clue in that it folds back on itself in the same massive three-dimensional manner that characterizes those on the Begram ivories and the Chakravartin slab from Jaggayyapeta.

The types of necklace and anklet worn on the Didarganj deity are equally imprecise as criteria proposed by Stern to support a second-century date, as both types of ornament were in use before Kushan times, the anklet on the earliest rondels at Bharhut (Pl. 5), and similar necklaces at Sanchi I. By all evidence the proper date of the *chauri*-bearer is Maurya or shortly thereafter.

With the Didarganj yakshi restored to an early period, a pre-Christian attribution to the coffer seems more plausible. Features common to some of the figures on the receptacle and the yakshi are as follows : heavy drapery concealing most of the body of the single figures on two of the corner supports[63]; weighty sashes; hair pulled to the back of the head, looped under and knotted over itself; conventional ripples of flesh on the torso. In spirit, however, they are quite dissimilar.

The four women engraved on the coffer cover are presented as on a stage with only the barest of signs to establish the milieu. The outdoors is inferred by floating blossoms and flowering branches. The figures are arranged in pairs and one of each pair is seated while being served by another. The woman to the left rests on a wicker stool and holds a parrot on one hand. Approaching her is a woman reaching out with one hand and in the other holding a bowl with fruit or flowers. The seated figure to the extreme right is on a four-legged cushioned stool and looks into a mirror held in one hand while a bowl is raised up to her by a kneeling figure. The only other prop is a covered dish on a tabouret in the background. The women are narrow-waisted but well endowed and, for all practical purposes, are naked, wearing only low-slung girdles, sashes and ample amounts of heavy jewellery—armlets, bracelets, anklets and earrings. Their movements are lithe and languorous. The scene, while uncluttered, is an intimate one, a glimpse of courtly life in a distant time.

While the figures on the coffer are in three-quarter view and in motion, the yakshi stands erect, frontal and static. Is it, perhaps, the fundamental difference between an icon, whose hieratic poise must inspire reverence, and a genre scene where the informal activities of the figures is the primary focus of interest ? The coffer remains a problem but evidence for an early date becomes stronger as one examines it more closely.

The coincidence of three motifs—the early type of chaitya arch, the overlapping rosette and the trefoil armlet—constitutes a syndrome most useful as a criterion

for attributing a date no later than Sanchi I to objects on which they are found. Stylistic conventions of drapery, sashes and rocks are corroborative and significant in that they are also featured on some of the ivories. In view of these conventions and the triple motif syndrome, Stern's criteria for adducing a Kushan date are not applicable. The weight of our evidence points to a date just about the time of the toranas of Sanchi I.

To re-capitulate, the trefoil armlet, so popular at Bharhut, appears on only two among hundreds of figures at Sanchi I and on none of the ivories ; the overlapping rosette appears only once on the ivories, not at all on the toranas; both the old and new types of chaitya arch are represented on the ivories but only one possible example of the old on the toranas of Sanchi I. In sum, the motifs on the Begram ivories and Sanchi I testify to a simultaneous dissolution of the old syndrome.

An absolute date for the toranas of Sanchi I is still undetermined. H. Sarkar and A. Ghosh[64] have shown how an inscription, recently discovered at Amaravati, has destroyed Barrett's "short chronology", responsible until now for dating these toranas as late as A.D. 15. The inscription most pertinent to the date of Sanchi I is one on the Bharhut torana stating that it was made in the domain of the Sungas, which could mean no later than 80 B.C.[65]. There is no reason to suppose that the Bharhut carvings were made at the very end of the Sunga reign ; it could very well have been twenty years before. There is remarkably little difference between the most advanced work at Bharhut (e.g. The Temple of the Turban, Pl. 8)[66] and the carvings at Sanchi I. As a matter of fact, some carvings on the architrave of the South Gate at Sanchi I[67] have a close stylistic kinship to the older sculptures on Sanchi II and the Bharhut *vedika*. Assuming that it took a generation at the most for the maturation of the style of the toranas at Sanchi I, we arrive at a date somewhere between 75 and 25 B.C. We have thus established the simultaneity of the Begram ivories and Sanchi I.

The reasons for the divergence between our dating of the ivories and that of Stern and those who have followed in his lead are twofold. One, we questioned the validity of the criteria used for the original dating through our isolation of three motifs—the triple syndrome—characteristic of the pre-Christian era. While our comparisons have often been the same, Stern adjusted the date of the Lomas Risi facade and the Didarganj yakshi in order to conform to the period allocated by him to the ivories. We, on the other hand, have preferred to establish an early date for the cave and the *chauri*-bearer and to place the ivories back in time.

Second, because of new discoveries made at Amaravati and published since the appearance of *Nouvelles recherches*, we are now able to accept earlier dates for Sanchi and Amaravati that may not have seemed plausible in 1954. Stern himself pointed out many illuminating relationships between Sanchi and Begram as well as between Amaravati and Begram. Supported by recent studies, our findings, we hope, will modify and update the perceptive and often brilliant analyses of the great French scholar and stimulate others to closer scrutiny of the Begram hoard.

This is a revised version of an article which will be published in the report of the Indian Art Symposium held in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in Fall 1970.

FOOTNOTES

1. *J. Hackin and J-R. Hackin,* Recherches archeologiques a Begram, *Memoires de la delegation archeologique francaise en Afghanistan, IX, Paris, 1939, 2 vols. Hereafter referred to as* Recherches archeologiques.

2. *J. Hackin,* Nouvelles recherches archeologiques a Begram (ancienne Kapici) *(1939-1940) with collaboration of J-R. Hackin, J. Carl, P. Hamelin; comparative studies by J. Auboyer, V. Elisseeff, O. Kurz, Ph. Stern, Paris, Memories de la delegation archeologique francaise en Afghanistan, XI, Paris, 1954, 2 vols. Hereafter referred to as* Nouvelles recherches.

3. *For summation of the conventional dates see B. Rowland, Jr.,* Ancient Art from Afghanistan, *New York, 1966, pp. 27 f. See also F. Coarelli, "The Painted Cups of Begram and the Ambrosian Iliad",* East and West, *N. S., vol. 13, no. 4, Dec. 1962, pp. 317-335. Some of the glass, he claims, is third century. A. Adriani, however, prefers a first century B.C. date for the plaster emblems. "Segnalazioni alessandrine Le scoperte di Begram e l'arte alessandrina,* "Archeologia Classica, *VII, 2, 1955, pp. 124-138.*

4. Nouvelles recherches, *pp. 38-41.*

5. *Rowland,* op. cit., *p. 52.*

6. *For discussion of the date of the Sanchi I toranas see below.*

7. *These drawings are after the author's photographs, but references will be cited where the motifs may be compared.*

8. Cf. *L. Bachhofer,* Early Indian Sculpture, *New York, n.d., vol. II, pl. 63; A. K. Coomaraswamy,* History of Indian and Indonesian Art, *New York, 1965, pl. VII, fig. 25.*

9. Cf. *A. K. Coomaraswamy,* La Sculpture de Bharhut, *Paris, 1956, pl. XXIV, fig. 61; pl. V, fig. 15; pl. VII, fig. 20.*

10. Cf. *J. Marshall and A. Foucher,* The Monuments of Sanchi, *London, n.d., vol. 3, pl. XI (bottom lintel). Hereafter referred to as Marshall,* Sanchi.

11. Cf. *Bachhofer,* op. cit., *vol. 2, pl. 107.*

12. Cf. *S.E. Lee (ed.),* Ancient Sculpture from India, *Cleveland, 1964, fig. 38.*

13. *See P. Chandra, "Yaksha and Yakshi Images from Vidisa,"* Ars Orientalis, *VI, 1066, fig. 4.*

14. *See Bachhofer,* op. cit., *vol. I, pl. 11.*

15. *See V. S. Agrawala, "Pre-Kushana Sculpture of Mathura,"* Journal of the U.P. Historical Society, *6, 1933, pp. 87-89.*

16. *See Bachhofer,* op. cit., *vol. I, pl. 10.*

17. *See Coomaraswamy,* Bharhut, *pl. XXIV, fig. 61.*

18. Cf. *N. P. Joshi,* Mathura Sculptures, *Mathura, 1966, figs 5,6. The motif on terracottas, as on stones, is widespread geographically;* cf. *Lee,* op. cit., *fig. 62.*

19. Nouvelles recherches, *pp. 38-41; Rowland,* op. cit, *p. 62, nos. 32-33.*

20. *The importance of these technical changes and their chronological implications is overlooked in the following statement by Rowland* (op. cit., *p. 62, no. 32*): "... *the pointed arch under which the women are placed is a representation of a typical portal from an Indian chaitya hall like Bhaja or Karli.*"

The evolution, culminating in the magnificent elaborations on the massive columns at Karle, is in transition at Nasik where: (1) the side aisles of the chaitya hall, or Cave 18, retain the half barrel-vault; (2) the columns have a simple abacus and pot base and are slightly tilted; (3) a large member carved as a railing at the bottom of the chaitya window simulates the function of a tie-rod.

The tie-rod and its significance has been discussed by the author in his lectures since 1954. See Vidya Dehejia, "Early Buddhist Caves at Junnar", Artibus Asiae, *XXXI, 2/3, 1969, pp. 150-151; "Early Activity at Amaravati",* Archives of Asian Art. XXIII, 1969-70, *p. 45.*

21. Nouvelles recherches, *fig. 641.*

22. Ibid, *fig. 642.*

23. *According to V. Dehejia* (Archives, *pp. 45, 54, n.* 3), *the chaitya arches on the left pillar of the south torana are without the tie-rod. She refers to a sequence of three arches on the top register. When compared to the single chaitya arch with a tie-rod on the panel below, the railing motif within each of the three upper arches appears to function, in fact, as a tie-rod. A possible appearance of the tie-rod prior to Sanchi I is at Bharhut. But the carving does not show enough details to permit certain identification. See Coomaraswamy,* Bharhut *pl. XLVII, fig. 196.*

24. *See Coomaraswamy,* Bharhut, *pls. IX, fig. 27; XXXII, fig. 86; XLV, fig. 177.*

25. *See Marshall,* Sanchi, *vol. 3, pl. LXXX, 33a.*

26. *See A. K. Coomaraswamy,* La Sculpture de Bodhgaya (*Ars Asiatica*), *XVIII, Paris, 1935, pls. II, IV.*

27. *See C. Sivaramamurti,* Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum, *Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, N. S. IV, 1956, pl. XVI, 5.*

28. *See Joshi.* op. cit., *pls. 2, 37.*

29. *The overlapping rosette is one of many motifs that persisted in Gandhara when lost in India proper; others are the half barrel-vaulted side aisles represented commonly on second-century Gandharan reliefs; tripartite jewelled armlets, possibly derived from our trefoil but quite transformed, frequently seen on second to third-century Gandharan bodhisattvas. See I. Lyons and H. Ingholt,* Gandharan Art in Pakistan, *New York, 1957, figs. 289 ff. The overlapping rosette does reappear much later in India during the medieval period.*

30. Nouvelles recherches, *fig. 95.*

31. Ibid., *figs. 104-107.*

32. Ibid. *For a reconstruction of this "throne" see fig. 638. Our pl. 16 illustrates a similar pair.*

33. *Marshall,* Sanchi, *vol. 2, pl. XLIV (on the front face of the East Gate, end of the bottom lintel and above the peacocks).*

34. *Upper storey, main wing, back wall of verandah. See D. Mitra* Udayagiri & Khandagiri, *New Delhi, 1960, pl. Vc (see first arch).*

35. *See* Nouvelles recherches, *fig. 233;* Recherches archeologiques, *pls. LIV-LXII, figs. 153-187.*

36. Nouvelles recherches, *pp. 55-57; figs. 550-649.*

37. Cf. *Coomaraswamy,* Bharhut, *pls. XLI-LI.*

38. *See Marshall,* Sanchi, *vol. 3, pl. LXXXII; 44a; see also vol. 2, pl. II, for a slightly later version on the top and bottom lintels on the South Gate (front), Sanchi I.*

39. Cf. Petronius Arbiter (*J. Sullivan Jr.*), Petronius, the Satyricon and the Fragments, *Penguin Books, 1965, p. 155.*

40. *Ph. Stern and M. Benisti,* Evolution du style indien d' Amaravati *Musee Guimet, Paris, 1961, pl. I.*

41. *D. T. Devendra,* Classical Sinhalese Sculpture, *London, 1958, pp. 9-11, figs. 20-23; S. Paranavitana, "Excavation of the Kantaka Chaitya at Mihintale"* Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology for the Year 1934, *vol.; IX, 1936, pp. 19-21.*

42. *See H. Zimmer (J. Campbell, ed.),* The Art of Indian Asia, *New York, 1955, vol. II, pls. 27-31, 38.*

43. *D. Barrett,* Sculptures from Amaravati in the British Museum, *London, 1954, pp. 13-20.*

44. *"Beginnings of Sculptural Art in south-east India: a stele from Amaravati,"* Ancient India, *20 & 21, 1964 & 65, pp. 168-177. See also P. R. Srinivasan, "Recently Discovered Early inscriptions from Amaravati and Their Significance,"* Lalit Kala, *10, Oct. 1961, pp. 59-60.*

45. Recherches archeologiques, *pl. LV, figs, 157 f., pl. LVI, fig 162.*

46. *Coomaraswamy,* Bharhut, *pl. XXIII, fig. 60; pl XXIV, fig. 62.*

47. Nouvelles recherches, *p. 41.*

48. Ibid., *figs. 469-471.*

49. Ibid., *p. 22.*

50. *From Chandraketugarh, 24-Parganas, Bengal. Now in the Asutosh Museum, Calcutta University.*

51. *See Bachhofer,* op. cit., *vol. II, pl. 74.*

52. *J. E. van Lohuizen-De Leeuw,* The "Scythian" Period, *Leiden, 1949, pp. 65-72.*

53. *See the consort of the Naga King adjacent to left pillar on bottom lintel, Marshall,* Sanchi, *vol. 2, pl. XCVII.*

54. Nouvelles recherches, *p. 41.*

55. *See Coomaraswamy,* Bodhgaya, *pls. XXXIX, LVI, figs. 1,2.*

56. *See Mitra,* Udayagiri, *pl. XIV, A.*

57. *See Marshall,* Sanchi, *vol. 3, pl. LXXVI 12b, 15a.*

58. *See Coomaraswamy,* Bharhut, *pl. XXIV, fig. 61; pl. XXXIII, fig. 91.*

59. *Bachhofer,* op. cit., *vol. II, pls. 92, 93.*

60. *See J. Marshall,* Taxila, *Cambridge, 1951, vol. 3, pl. 132, nos. 12, 13.*

61. *See Sivaramamurti,* op. cit., *pl. XIV, fig. 5.*

62. *See Bachhofer,* op. cit., *vol. II, pl. 79. Prototypes of this style occur as early as at Bharhut, see Coomaraswamy,* Bharhut, *pl. XVII, figs. 41, 42.*

63. Recherches archeologiques, *figs. 156-158, 162; two figures (157, 162) are clearly wearing pantaloons. For reconstruction of the coffer see* Nouvelles recherches, *fig. 650.*

64. Op cit., *p. 169.*

65. *Coomaraswmay,* Bharhut, *p. 8.*

66. Ibid., *pl. XI fig. 30.*

67. *Marshall,* Sanchi, *vol. 2, pl. 2.*

PRIVATE LIFE IN ANCIENT INDIA AS SEEN FROM THE IVORY SCULPTURES OF BEGRAM

RAJINDER KUMAR & ASSOCIATES
B6/17, SHOPPING CENTRE
SAFDARJUNG ENCLAVE
NEW DELHI - 110029
TEL. NO. 600471-603123
TELEX : [illegible] 726 RKA IN

The plaques (about 600) of sculptured or engraved ivory discovered in Begram by Joseph and Ria Hackin are important contributions to the study of details of daily life in India of the 2nd century *circa* A.D.

The most striking fact upon examining this collection of sculptures is the almost complete absence of male representations, which comprise only one or two *rajas*, a groom, some horsemen and hunters, a few servants and some mythical beings belonging to the decorative type. It is possible that this dearth of masculine representations was international and that it corresponded to the well-known fact that no man except the master of the house and the old door-keeper (Kancukin) of the harem, had access to the private apartments reserved for women. If this prohibition extended to the figures, which were to decorate these apartments, one could conclude that the seats which they decorated were intended for the private use of the inner apartments.

Another remarkable fact : apart from two subjects taken from legend which illustrates *Jataka*, and certain hunting scenes, the great majority of the illustrated compositions bear reference to the toilette and dress of women, as also to the activities peculiar to the women of a royal or princely palace. Indeed, the majority of the sculptures seem to be in perfect conformity with the descriptions given in the Sanskrit and Pali texts, of the apartments reserved for women—the setting in which the scenes take place themselves, the characters and even the animals and vegetation.

What do the texts teach us : Once one has passed through the doors of the town guarded by soldiers at arms, once the great arteries leading to the centre have been traversed, one arrives at the palace and at the aristocratic dwellings. The inner world within the inner world of the city, the royal, princely or noble abode appears like a Roman Villa with successive courtyards—and innumerable buildings, the furthest courtyard—the eighth according to *Mrichchhakatika* IV, 28-30—is reserved for the private apartments (*Kutagara*) of the master of the house (*grhakaraka*), which contains the harem (*suddhanta, antahpura, patinam, sadana*). These possess their own lotus ponds, private entrances, and exits, interior yards, halls, gardens (*vrksavatika* or *puspavatika*). The garden should be provided with flowers and trees, and a swing should be placed in a well-shaded spot. One sees ponds covered with pink and white lotuses, groves of asoka (*savaca indica linn*). Cats, peacocks, mongoose should be kept there, as also parrots and various other birds which are also used to detect or to kill snakes. Furniture comprises in the main, according to the *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana, of beds and seats, stands and small round tables, cushions and rugs.

In this calm and pleasing setting, the major occupation is the toilette and the dressing; these two activities have been moreover approved among the arts (*Sukranitisara* IV, III-135) which is in conformity with the ethnological point of view—and consists of innumerable operations of which the most essential are looking at oneself in a mirror (*adarsa*), dressing of the hair (*sikha-bandham*), anointment of the body with sandalwood paste (*anulepana*), and the sole of the feet with lacquer, adorning oneself with jewels, flowers and garlands.

Now we find all these details in abundance on the ivory sculptures of Begram. While the women guards (*yarani*) armed with pikes (*prasa*), keep watch on the ramparts and the maid servants, who guard the doors, (*dvarapali* or *danvarika*) lean on their halberds, the mistresses dress their hair and adorn themselves while looking in a mirror (*mukara*) (Fig. 1), stretched out on a reclining couch, or seated on an ornamental bench, laid out among the *asoka* trees, but near a door of the house. Around them flock their maid-servants (*sairandhri* and *prasadhika*) helping them, massaging them, passing to them their jewellery, painting the soles of their feet. Other maids bring them boxes of betel and spices, jars of ointments, caskets of jewels, whilst still others (*camera dharini* or *kirah*) keep them comfortable with the help of fans (*tala-vrrita*) and fly-swatters (*camera* or *cavri*). During this time, female musicians and dancers entertain them. Further away move about the female carrier of the royal sword, (*kadjavahim*) (Fig. 6) and the female dwarfs (*vamanika*) one of whom wears a masculine costume similar to that of the horsemen. Or else seated near an asoka tree, a banana tree or a mango tree in bloom, mistresses and servants sip drinks and savour of delicacies, which they share with the ducks, with a parrot or with a familiar goose. Elsewhere, they gather branches of the asoka tree, play ball (*kandikakrida*) (Fig. 2), or have themselves rocked on a swing (Fig. 3). The young mothers play with their children (Fig. 4). They carry them astride on one hip and nurse them while walking. And the hunters, on horseback or on foot, accompanied by a dog and followed by a porter with a basket, set out among the groves of the *asoka* to pursue big and small game.

All these characters can be recognised either by their function or by their dress. The *rajas* wear their usual

princely costume and turban (*usnisa*) the hermits (*vana-prastha*) with long flowing hair, are clad in a loin-cloth of bark (*valkala*). The young men, with short hair, wear a tunic with long sleeves, girded at the waist and forming a flared skirt, and a stripped dhoti worn between the legs, whose flap (*kaccha*) falls in the form of a "fan", in the fashion (*talaventaka*). The grooms (*suta*) and the horse merchants (*asva-vanija*) are dressed in a great coat (*kancuka*) and wear a Scythian cap on the head (Fig. 6). The horsemen and hunters are protected by a tight fitting jacket with long sleeves, the front crossed in a point, and by narrow trousers tight at the ankles, embellished with a pearly braid along the legs. The elephant drivers (*hastipaka*) only wear a pair of socks, their hair styles generally call to mind the Phrygian cap.

The women who are represented in innumerable plaques offer less variety. Interestingly enough, mistresses and servants wear the same dress and the same ornaments. The usual garment is the long *dhoti*, decorated with curved folds whose flap falls down, like that of the men in *talaventaka*; this skirt, so transparent that it is often almost invisible, is fixed at the hips by a belt made of several rows of "pearls" or beads (*mekhalakalenga*) provided with a clasp in the front; sometimes this belt is replaced by a knotted scarf (*vestaka*). The dancers and the musicians wear an additional scarf which goes over the nape on the neck and flows down the arms.

We have mentioned above a female dwarf wearing a masculine costume ; another woman represented at Begram wears trousers which appear beneath an ample dress (*aprapnadina*) whose train is lifted up on her left arm. The women on watch at the doors and the bodyguards are also dressed in a masculine costume : tight jacket with long sleeves, the front tapering, held tight at the waist like a corolla around the pistil ; a *dhoti* is sometimes shown around the legs. One of these "amazons" wear a costume of the same type but decorated at the waist with little orbs, in which Joseph Hackin saw a correlation with the number of children. In Mathura, the skirt of this tunic falls in hollow regular folds and appears to be of Gandharan origin; elsewhere we know it was only used with the masculine costume.

Children also populate the harem, the little girls wear the same dress and the same ornaments as the women. As for the boys, they appear in the nude, a tuft of hair massed in the form of an egg, in front of the head (*sikhanda*) protected from evil influences by a necklace of tiger claws (Fig. 4).

Like the costumes, the feminine ornaments differ little from servants to mistress; the necklaces (*hara*) which are not constantly worn comprise usually of several rows of pearls passed around the shoulders or else falling between the breasts, the necklace-cum-belt (*hemavaikaksaka* or *chanavira*) is rare. The bracelets (*valaya*) consist of a series of rings fitting around the forearm like a high wrist-band (*kalakavalaya*), and of rigid rings which are fairly wide (*ratnavalaya*). These two categories are often worn simultaneously. Armlets (*keyuria*) of very simple types, are quite rare. As for ornaments for ankles, they sometimes comprise a series of rings (*manjira*) similar to those around the arm; one or two thicker rings (*nupura*) are more frequently used embellished with a fairly elaborate decoration composed of twisted cords; florets and pearls (*manjira* and *nupura*) are sometimes combined as on the arms, the wrist-bands and the bracelets. The earrings (*kundala*) are of varied forms, the most frequently used are discoidal (*patrakundalas*) and cylindrical (*trikantaka*); others are in the form of a heart, some resemble broken rings (*mistakundala* or *munalakundala*), or else they are square and decorated with a floret (*karnavestana*).

As for the hair styles, they are extremely varied, one can distinguish among them several principal types, turbans, buns and tresses. The turbans are made of stripped cloth decorated with rows of pearls; often they appear to be in the form of a coronet; they are set off with branches of *asoka*. One of them seen on the head, resembles greatly the head-dress of a woman represented in Cave II of Ajanta on the walls of the sanctuary.

Hair styles with buns (*kesapas*) are numerous ; the hair is drawn back, forming a sort of ball or discus on the forehead; and the bun, often very pointed, stands up perpendicular to the nape of the neck, or even almost vertically. Sometimes a knot of pearly material is placed horizontally on the top of the head (Fig. 1); elsewhere, it is a small reliquary or a box containing a perfumed paste and held to the bun by a ribbon. Other variations exist like head-bands or coronets joined to the bun, twisted cords arranged on the head etc. The majority of these hair styles are in the form of a circle—or an oval—arranged above the forehead and appearing to consist of either a tuft of hair or a jewel ; the best example in this respect is a female head of fairly large size found in the excavations of 1937, where this circle is manifestly a jewel (*catulatilakamases*) decorated with a fully bloomed lotus ; it partly hides the parting separating the hair. These are arranged symmetrically in the form of a brace and end in flat curls (*cikura* or *bhramaraka*) ; this is a hair style which one finds constantly at Mathura, but which one sees also at Amravati.

As for long hair it is rare, a woman combing her hair has it loose, another possesses tresses which fall from the side upto the hips.

Near these people, clad and ornamented in various fashions, familiar animals lived in the same intimacy as today dogs and cats in a Western family. Geese nibble at the loose hair of the women or play with them; ducks beg for delicacies; peacocks, clambering atop a perch, are fed by them, parrots and peacocks climb on to their arms or hips without ceremony. Numerous birds, difficult to identify, are also represented with the female entourage, something which can be easily explained if we remember that each house included an aviary (*tanka*) adjoining the private apartments which contained among others, cuckoos, pheasants and pigeons. Besides, the "game with the bird" (*suka-krda*) is a well-known literary cliche. In numerous plaques of Begram, cats and other small felines pursue them, watch them or even devour them.

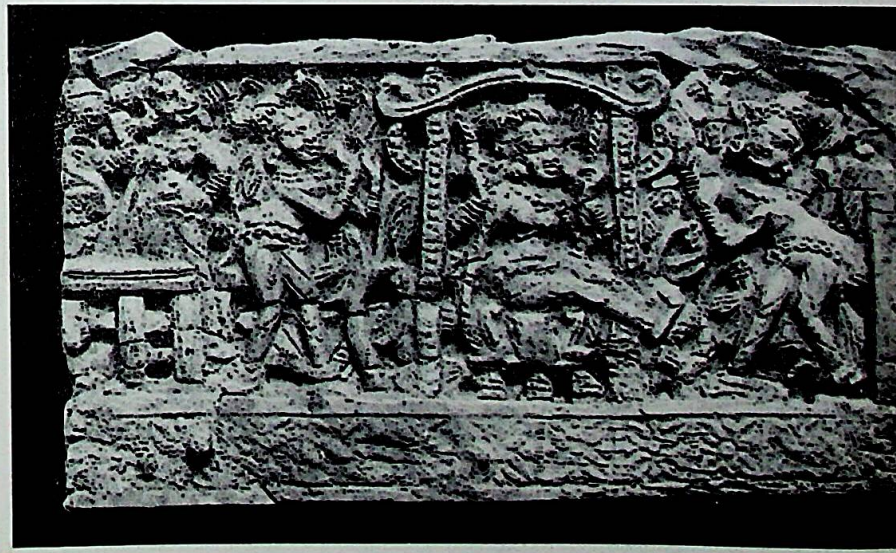
The elephant, the horse and the humped bull, whose stables and sheds are to be found in the first yards near the main gate, are used for transport and for hunting. The

1 *Lower part of a footstool.*
Excavations of 1937. No. 329(183b).
Museum of Kabul.

2 *Women playing ball.*
Excavations of 1939-40. No. 191t.

3 *Woman on a swing.*
Excavations of 1939-40. No. 205b.

2



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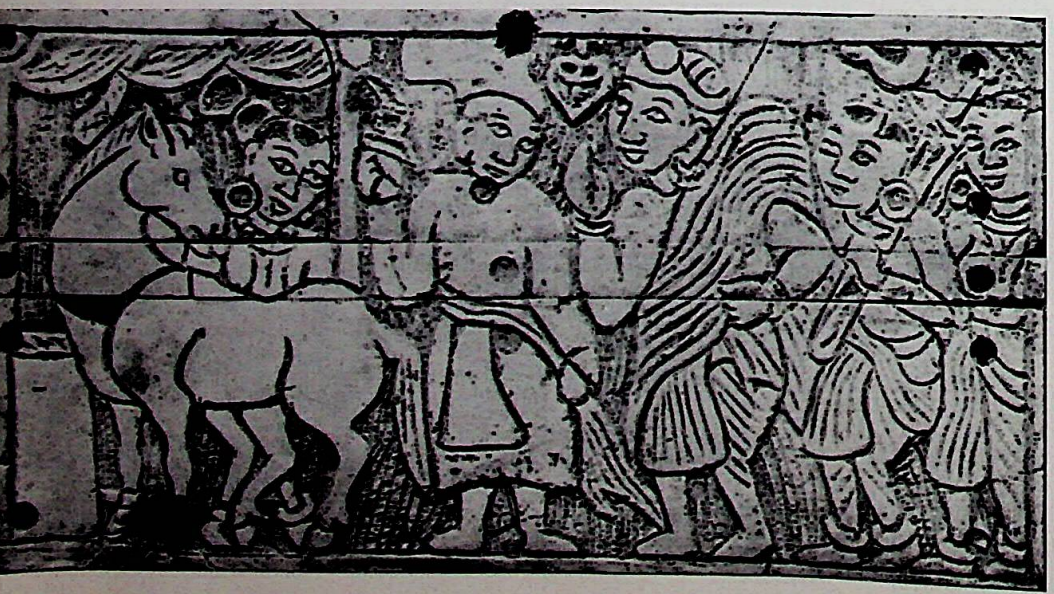

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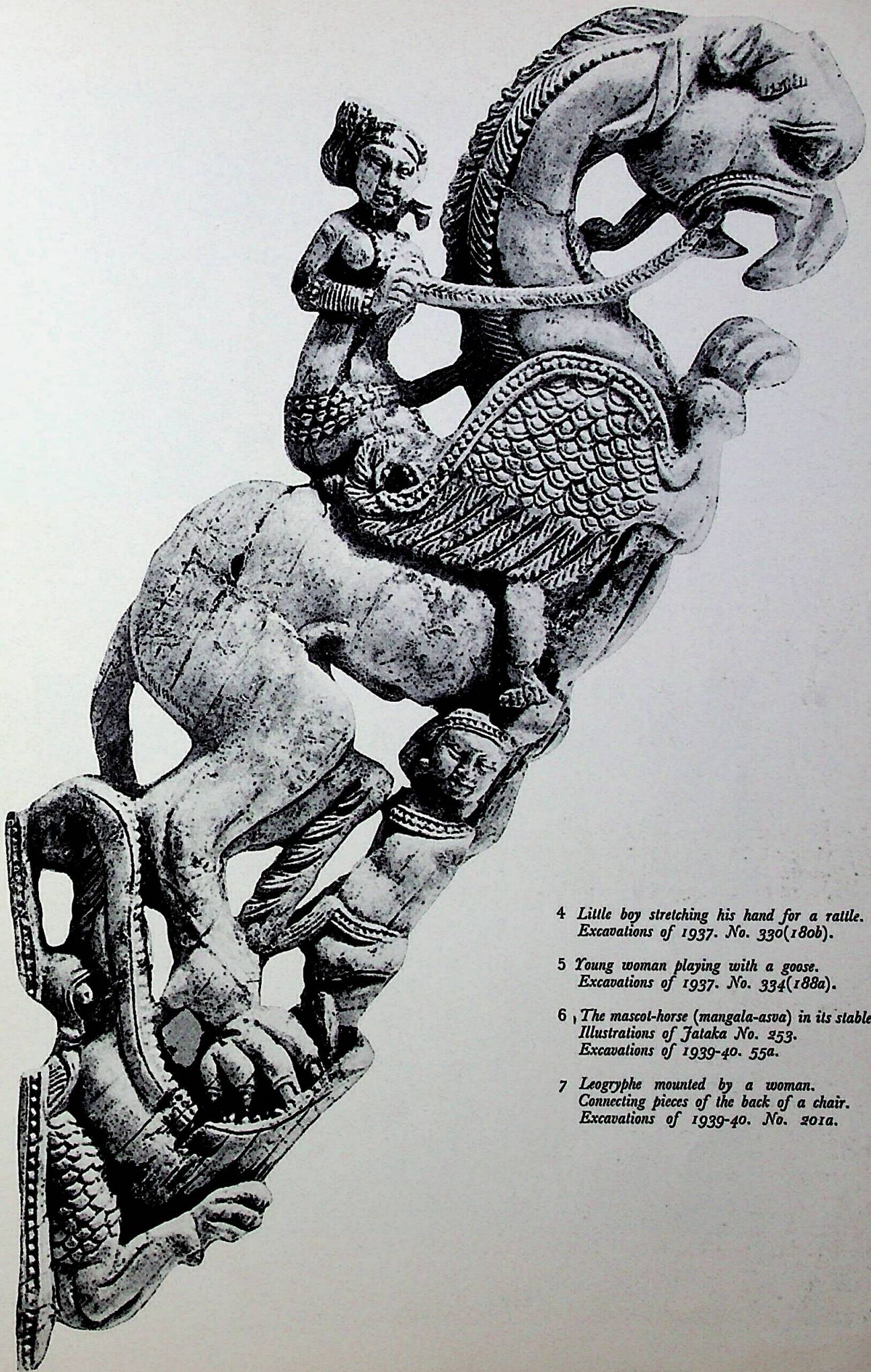
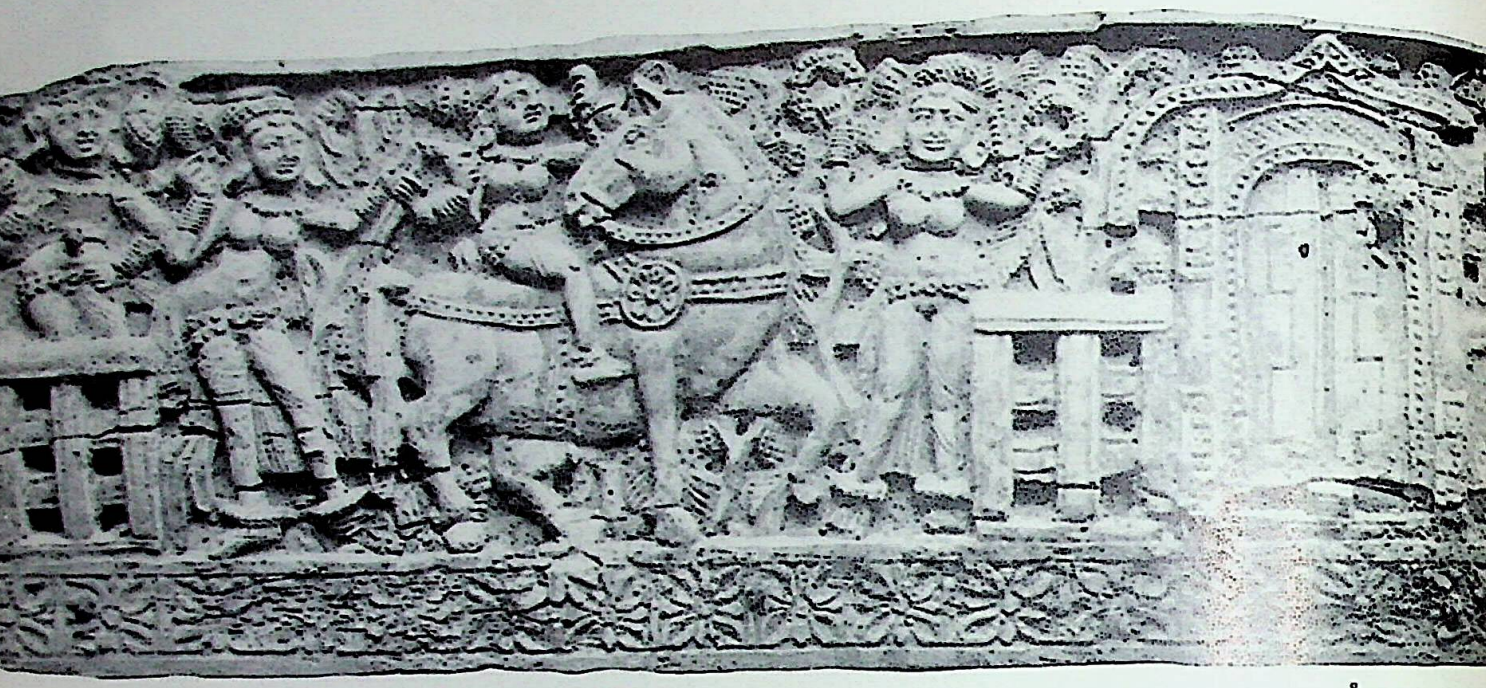


4 *Little boy stretching his hand for a rattle. Excavations of 1937. No. 330(180b).*

5 *Young woman playing with a goose. Excavations of 1937. No. 334(188a).*

6 *The mascot-horse (mangala-asva) in its stable. Illustrations of Jataka No. 253. Excavations of 1939-40. 55a.*

7 *Leogryphe mounted by a woman. Connecting pieces of the back of a chair. Excavations of 1939-40. No. 201a.*



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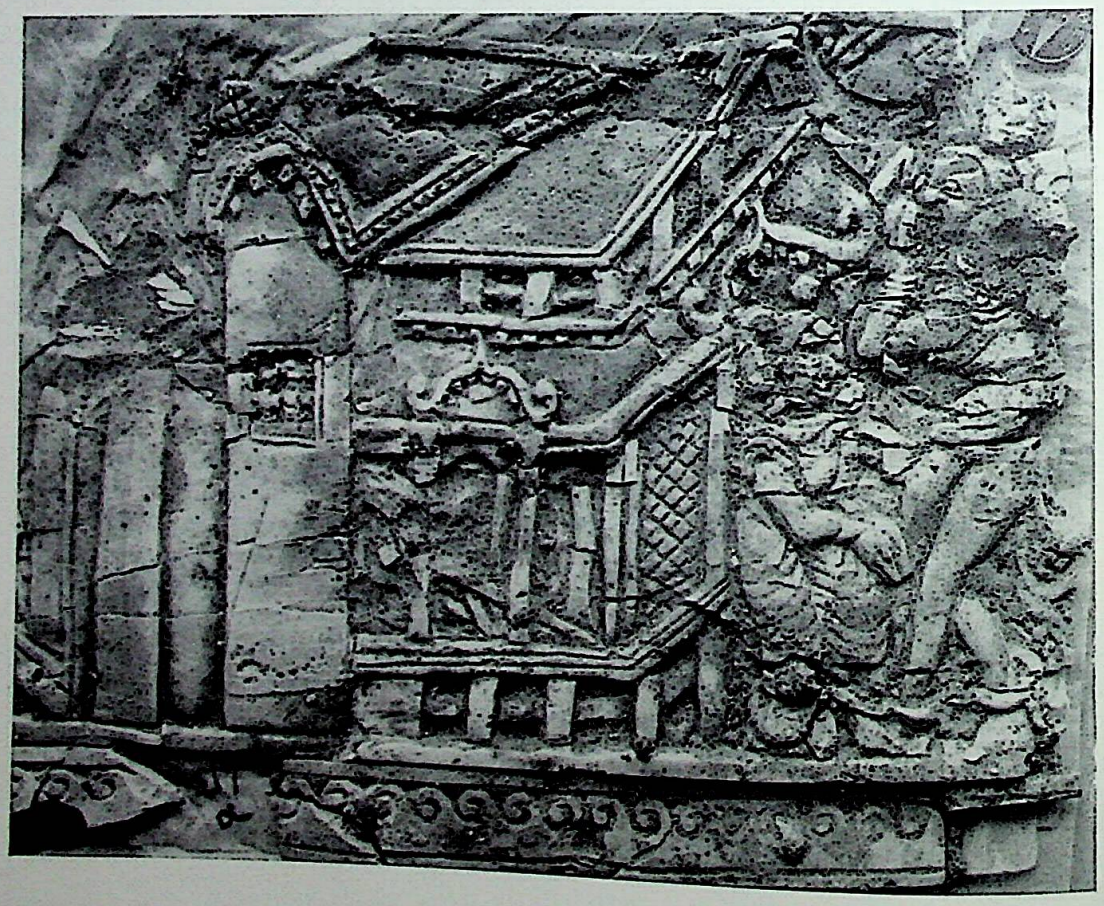
8 *Horsewoman.*
Excavations of 1939-40. No. 191j.

9 *The harem of a royal palace(?)*
Excavations of 1939-40. No. 217a.
Museum of Kabul.



9

domesticated elephants usually carry on their backs a rectangular carpet with a rich geometrical design, a rope passed like a girdle, a scarf thrown around the neck ; the head is adorned with a coronet and a bridle crossed on a phalera, placed between the eyes ; they sometimes wear anklets and a bell hangs from a rope. They are led by means of a goad whose hook is curved. Women mount them, conduct them, except where we see a few male mahouts.

The horses, except the ones which in the legend of *mangalaasva*, are free of harness (Fig. 6), are provided with a bridle, which is sometimes surmounted with a plume, reins and sometimes a bit, a tether from the tail to the breast is provided with one or two phaleras in the form of a rose and upholds the saddle rug on which is placed a saddle turned back and fitted to the girth; no indication of stirrups or surcingle can be found. The horses are mounted both by men and women. In one of the scenes represented at Begram, the horsewoman is preceded by a woman brandishing in each hand a ring, this is to be likened to the ring which the groom usually holds running in front of the horse of the Bodhisattva Siddhartha at the time of the great departure.

As for the humped bulls, they are used to draw covered chariots (*go-ratha*) an example of which can be seen in the collection of ivory sculptures found in 1937 and of which one knows a similar one at Mathura.

The domestic animals represented at Begram are completed by a running dog which accompanies a horseman and by a living doe in an asrama. As for wild animals, they are often hunted or captured : wild boar, wild sow and young wild boar; elephants, bulls, does, gazelles, fawns, tigers, lions, lionesses (some are difficult to identify) a tapir—a wolf; a monkey. Finally, an owl and also some fish which are utilised for the decorative motifs in the same style as at Mathura.

The setting in which the scenes take place is simplified: a tree evokes a grove; a door a house, with the exception of rare examples in which a very stylised scene is shown; three types of trees are represented ; the asoka (*saraca indica linn*) whose use is multiple (woods and gardens, ornaments of feminine hairstyles, motifs for garlands etc.); the mango tree (skt. *amra;* lat. *mangifera indica linn*) in bloom more frequently; and the banana tree (skt. *kadali;* lat. *Alisa*) rarer still.

Although the architectural framework is simplified, the ivory sculptures of Begram give special information namely about the porticos (*torana*) and the doors surmounted by the Indian arch : no relief in stone nor any animal painting in fact have reproduced them so minutely, with such rich ornamentalism. They range from the most simple types with a single lintel, to the most elaborate styles, with three lintels and a quantity of symbols added to them (*Jalatorana*). One can compare them to those of Sanchi and to the porticos represented at Mathura, where one sees, as at Begram, some *makara* integrated with lintels whose extremities they adorn, whilst in the Amravati school they are added to the outside of the posts (*stambha*) in front of each lintel. At Begram the ends of the lower lintels are generally joined to the *stambha* by a piece of fitting in the form of an arc—similar to those at the backs of the seats (Fig. 8) and usually in the form of a cat. This piece can be compared to that of the *torana* represented on an *avagapatta* of Mathura; one also sees it at Nasik, Cave No. III.

A particular type of *torana* can also be seen at Begram; its architraves are formed by assembling the bodies of *naga* with four or five heads. Although one does not find anywhere to our knowledge a similar *torana*, J. Hackin has very justly alluded to the *stupa* represented in a relief of Amravati with reference to them, whose dome is also covered with the bodies of *naga* knotted together in a sort of wide network, to which can be added *a stupa* represented in relief No. CB—9 in the Archaeological Museum of Sarnath, belonging to the Barhut style.

As for the *grhadvara-torana*, they are also found in large quantities at Begram. Used as doors to the houses, they are provided with leaves at the rounded summit, and buried in the ground between the two *stambhas*, with a sill provided with a catch at the centre (*indrakira*). The leaves were formed of heavy panels of wood (*kavata*) that the *Mahavamsa* XXV, 28, described as covered with iron, and the *Mricchhakatika*, Iv, 28-30, as reinforced by deeply embedded nails. Those of the doors of Begram are always provided with a particular door whose details are engraved; a sort of vertical border, horizontals and circles; it is possible that these are inlaid work in metal or handle or knockers of the door. The leaves are always represented half-open and one can notice in the opening one or two details which could be the cross-bars for locking (palighs) mentioned by the *Buddhacarita* V, 12.

The *grhadvara-toranas* are of various types at Begram where they constitute a document of exceptional groups : (1) the two *stambhas* penetrate under the framework of the arc and do not possess capitals; their spacing is maintained towards the upper part either by fairly stylised bands or by a rectilinear lintel decorated with various geometric or floral elements, above which ususlly a half-lotus blooms. The opening of the door is, therefore, either rectilinear or round at the top. In one case, as in the other, the *stambhas* are joined together at the lateral springings of the roof by cross-bars "in the form of kegs". Although this category of a door is akin to the door of the cave of *Lomasa Risi* at the Barabar Hills, and to that of Karli, by the purity of its details and its constituent parts, the decoration of the most perfected bands also recall the grotto of Ajanta and Khandagiri. (2) The roof, in the form of a fairly wide brace rests on the capitals at the top of the *stambha*: in certain cases, bands are placed immediately above the arch, which goes beyond and supports the distance between the slabs ; in other cases, the bands are absent and one can compare them to certain architectural models in the reliefs of Sanchi, Mathura and Amravati.

The capitals represented in this type of door are composed from top to bottom—of a very thin slab of a part similar to the volutes of a Corinthian capital or of the composite Roman style (which one finds already at Barhut) of two animals crossing each other, often winged and usually mounted by small characters, and of an astragal in a simple or double flat cushion. It appears that this is the only type of capital used at Begram ; it is also found in a *pancaram* with two columns provided with a cornice resting on the ends of apparent joints and in the lower storey of

a *prasada*, where the doors alternate with the pillars. This type of capital is seen more particularly at Mathura in a less perfected form and appears to have its prototype at Bodhgaya. An exceptional capital appears to present, between two "ionic" volutes, the bust of a person. It is to be compared with a Parthian capital described earlier by G. Combaz and it recalls the numerous pseudo-Corinthian capitals of Gandhara and of Surkh Kotal. Another capital of Begram, independent of any door and represented behind a bed, is composed of a slab, bound at the shaft by two animals rearing up in an arc like the consoles of Khandagiri.

These two types of doors apply equally to the porticos and doors provided with leaves like the *torana* ; they are usually flanked on both sides by a suggestion of balustrades (*vedika*) ; these are of various types gathering together several decorations of palisades, or abiding more frequently by the usual translation of the Buddhist *vedika* where the cross-bars (*suci*) sink upto the bolts into the mortises of the posts (*stambha*) (Fig. 7). Entire plaques are sculptured in the form of *vedika*; and in the original arrangement of the ivory plaques on the back of the seats, they formed dividers between the different historical accounts ; these *vedikas* are usually decorated with medallions and half medallions of the lotus.

Other doors, different from the preceding ones, can be seen on the ivory sculptures of Begram; these are the gates of the town (*gopura*) covered with a vault, provided at the side with a small wall (*prakara*) behind which stand women armed with lances; these buildings have a rectangular door, which one also finds represented alone and which is bordered at the top by a straight lintel (*nadadau*). These buildings are sometimes preceded by a portico surmounted by a rolling architrave which is in perfect conformity with the illustrations found at Sanchi and at Amravati; the *torana* with lintels whose role seems to be purely ornamental and gratuitous, preceded the entrance to the town.

From the *pancaram*, with two columns and the *prasada*, mentioned above, one sees also at Begram an edifice formed of two bodies, a rectangular building with a cradle vault and furnished with a latticed window, resembling the *gopura* described earlier and adjoining a pavilion with a flat roof (*prastara*), provided with a storey (*bhumika*), whose beams supporting the floor appear at the exterior of the wall provided with a veranda (*ralinda*); this floor surmounts the principal part (*ani-tala*), which has two doors decorated with the Indian arch and a wide rectangular bay covered by lattice work; the door facing the observer is composed of an opening at the rounded top between two columns with separated capitals supporting a rectilinear lintel and appears to be provided with a staircase (*sopana*), whose banisters can be seen. It seems that this edifice can be designated as an *antalipura*, that is like the inner apartments of a royal palace (Fig 9).

Finally, a hut of reeds (*parna-kuti*), where the anchorites live and a stable intended for the *raja's* horse are also represented at Begram. The hut is of a single type, circular, with a hemispheric roof without any girders, with three bindings to surround it and a door at the rounded top, it symbolises an *asrama*, in the midst of a wood of *asoka:* this localisation is indicated by the presence of a faggot intended for the sacrificial fire. As for the stable (Fig. 6), which probably stood in one of the first courts of the royal palace, it is very simple, but has a sort of canopy whose uplifted curtains are there to remind us of the purple and gold-spangled hangings which (the *Jataka* No.253 assures us), as a general rule, were there to decorate the stall of the *mangala-asva*, mascot-horse, *ratna* of the *cakravartin*. As in the architecture, the ivory sculptures of Begram provide abundant documentation relating to the objects used in the setting already described and to an epoch dating by hypothesis to the first two centuries A.D. One can thus study these type of wicker baskets which resemble more than anything else those of the Amravati and Mathura schools. Numerous forms of vessels, very diversified, of which some examples (cups and bowls without a stem, *panapatra*—or *casaka*) were probably transparent because the liquid they contained is indicated with red colour; comparisons can be made with similar cups at Ajanta, Caves I, II & XVII.

Arms for hunting and for war are the hunting spear and the pike (*prasa*), the knife without a sheath, the bow (*dhanu*) and feathered arrow (*isu*) with a triangular point, contained in a quiver carried on the back, the points upwards; the shield in a half crescent. One must add to this the arms of parade: swords, halberds whose base is weighed down with a thick cylinder ; finally elephant tusks.

The furniture comprises, apart from the baskets and the vessels, of seats and beds of "poufs" in wicker work (Fig. 7), small round tables or consoles, stands in the form of a sandglass (*bhojana phalaka* or *pattalandolika*) and of columns, footstools (*padapitha*) and cushions (*mandalagra bosi*). Comparative documents to which one could have recourse are found at Mathura, in the Amravati school, at Ajanta (especially in Cave X).

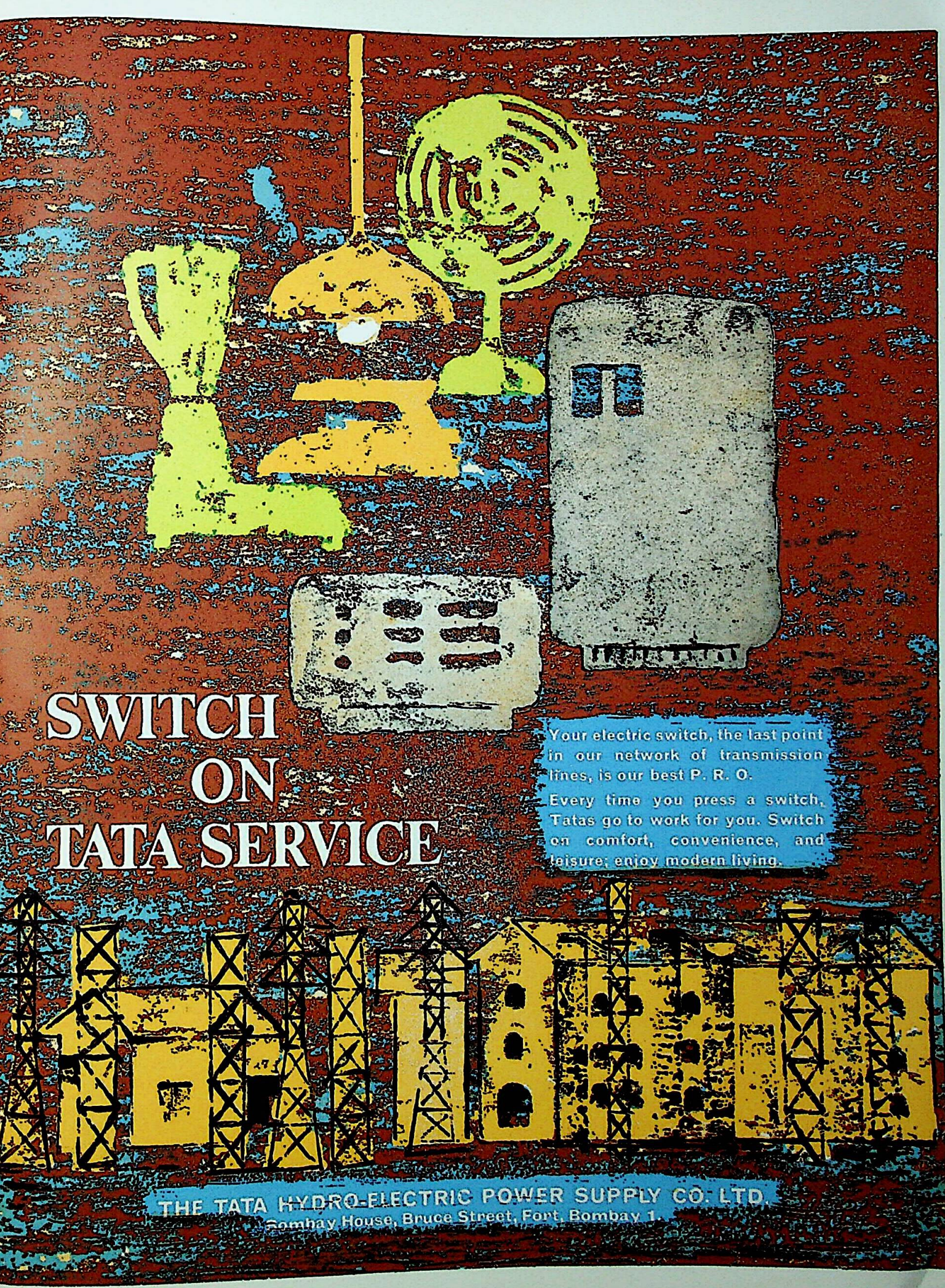
This inventory is completed by a toy (a rattle) (Fig. 4), a ball decorated in squares, with dots, and various musical instruments, cymbals, drums of various types (on a circular framework played with a rod, convex and played with bare hands), a trumpet or horn, curved harps, transverse flute. There also, comparisons can be made with the Barhut, Mathura and the Amravati schools.

Thus the ivory sculptures of Begram are of an exceptional interest, not only because they are manifestly of Indian origin, and because their presence in the heart of Afghanistan attests, without a shade of doubt, the representation of Indian ivory sculptures, but also because they provide numerous indications about the secular art of ancient India whose representations were extremely rare until the discovery made by the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan.

JEANNINE AUBOYER,

Chief Conservator of the Musee Guimet.

This article is a digest of the one by the same author which appeared in Paris in 1954 in New Archaeological Research in Begram. *By J. Hackin (posthumous work) under the French title* "La via Privee dans l'Inde' ancienne d'apres. les Ivories de Begram. (*The Private Life in Ancient India as seen from the Ivory Statues of Begram*).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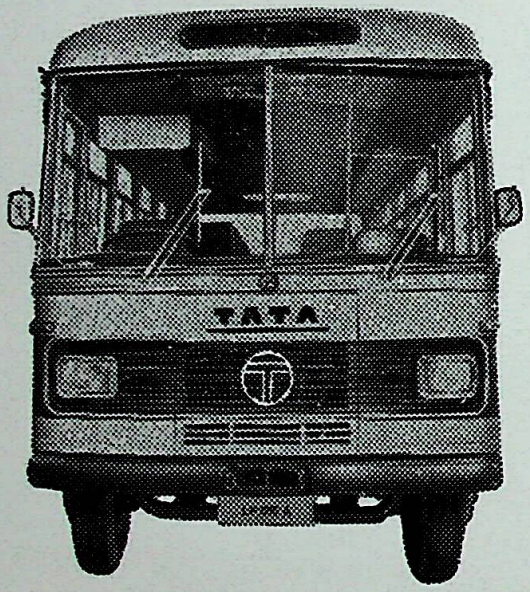

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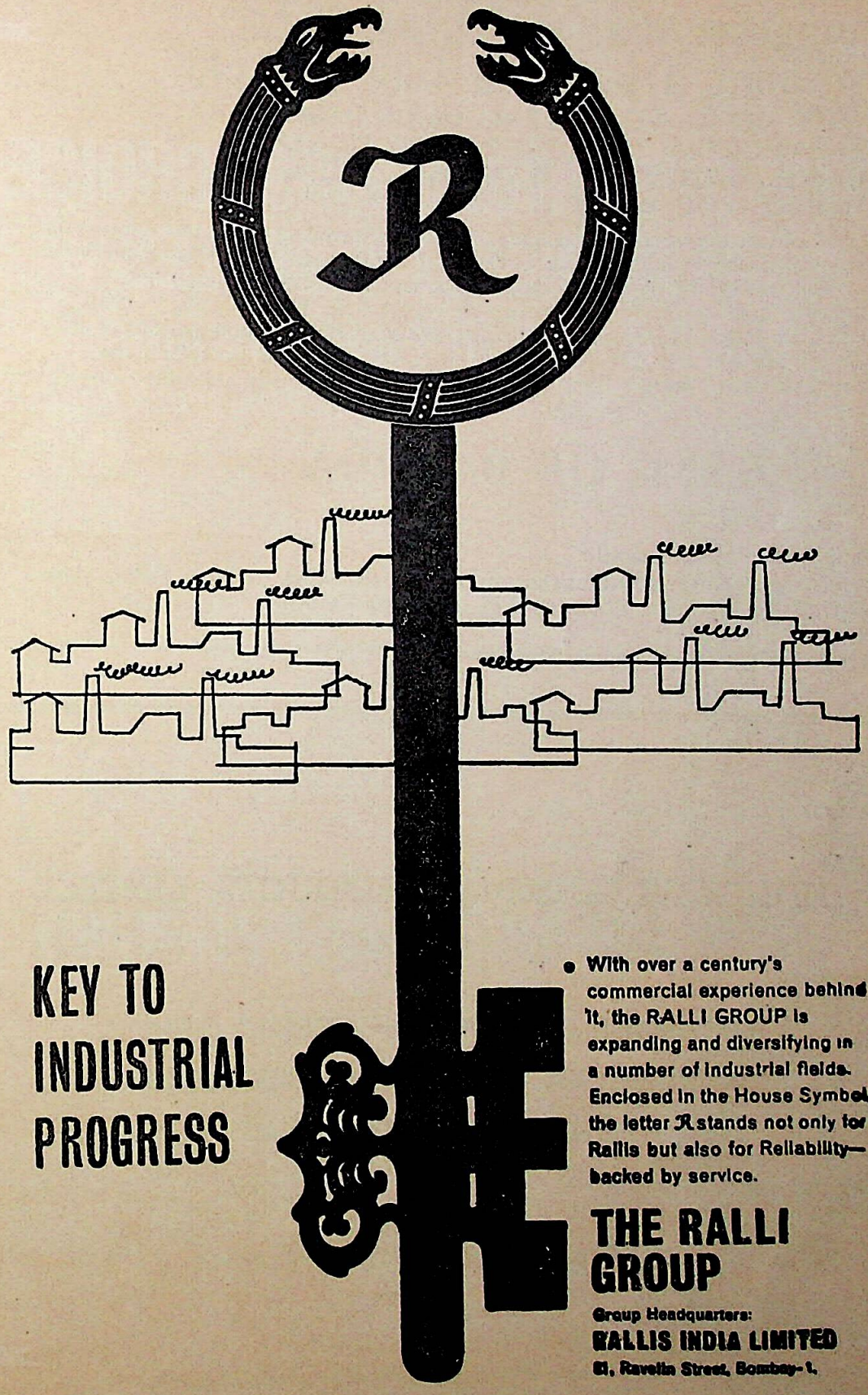

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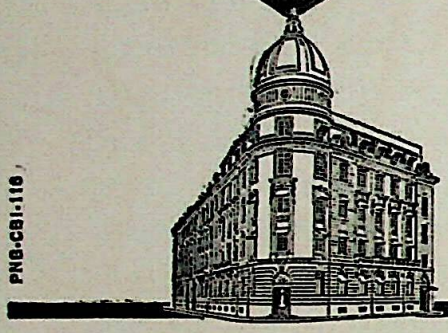

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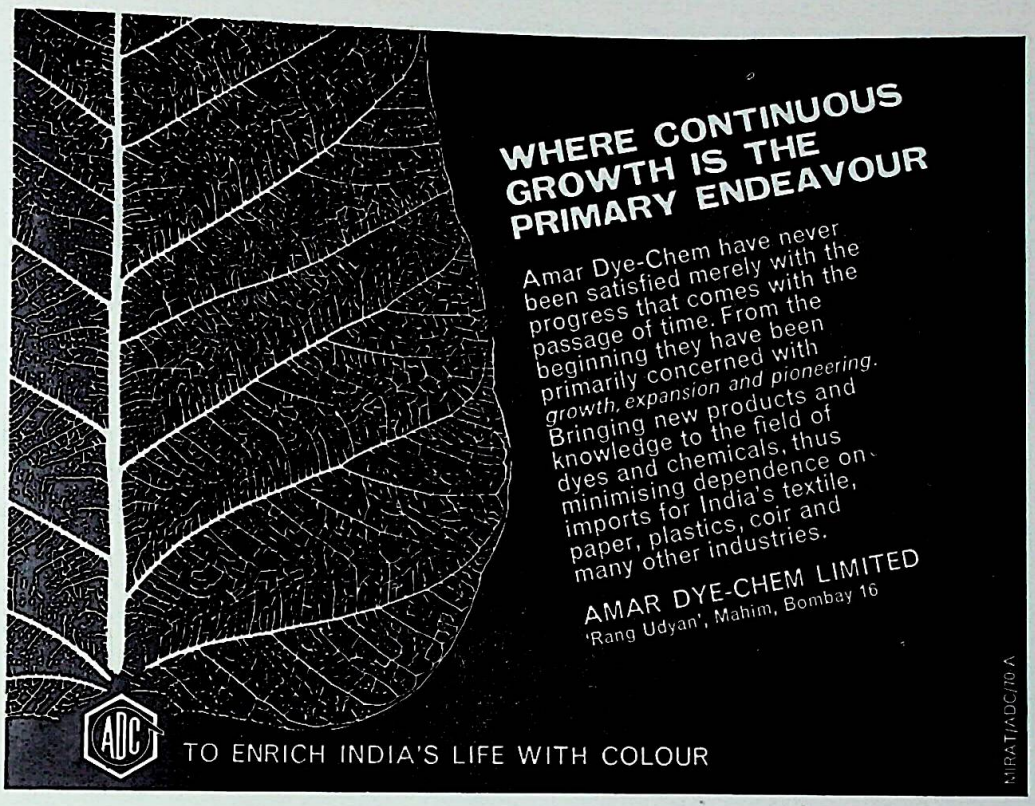

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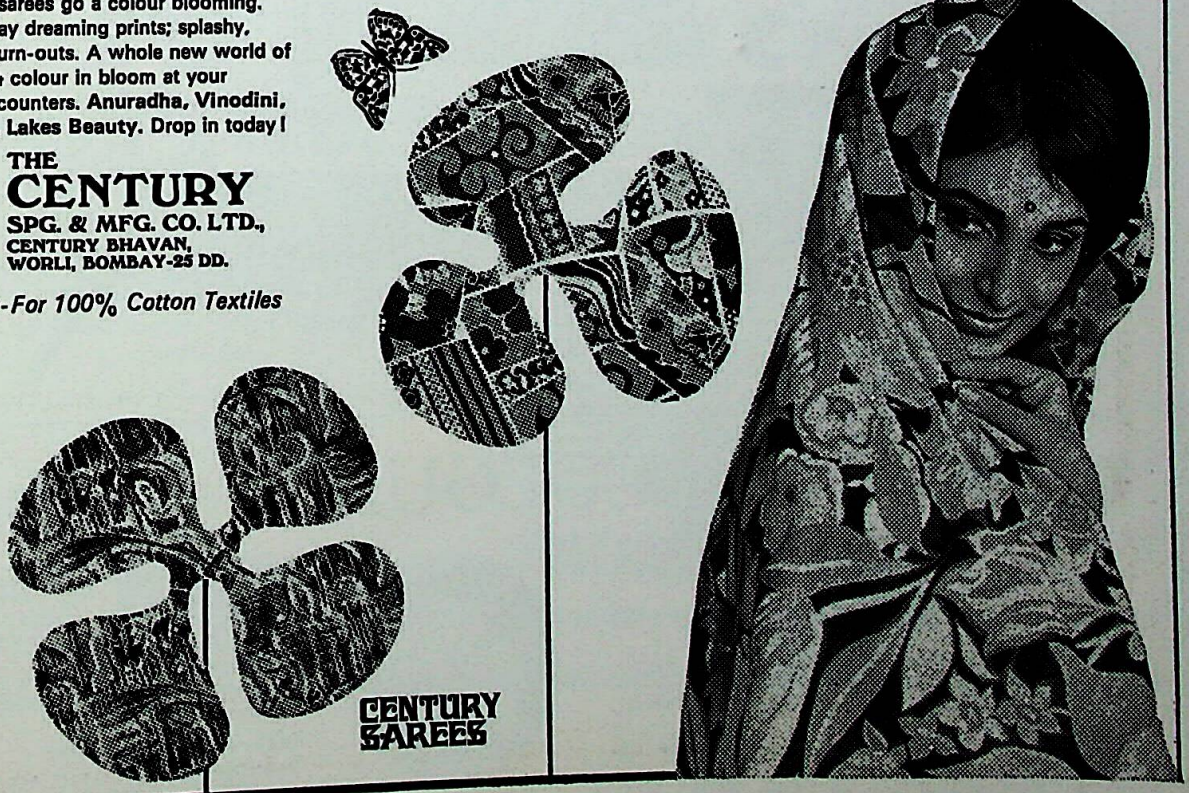

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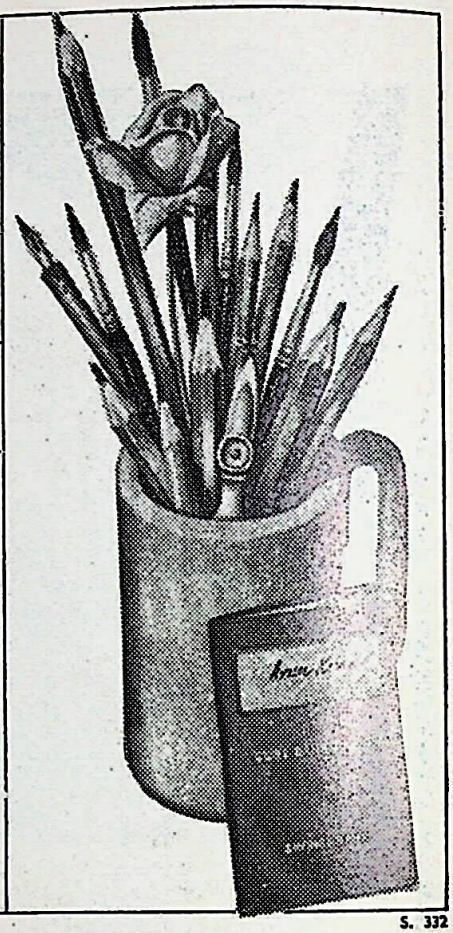

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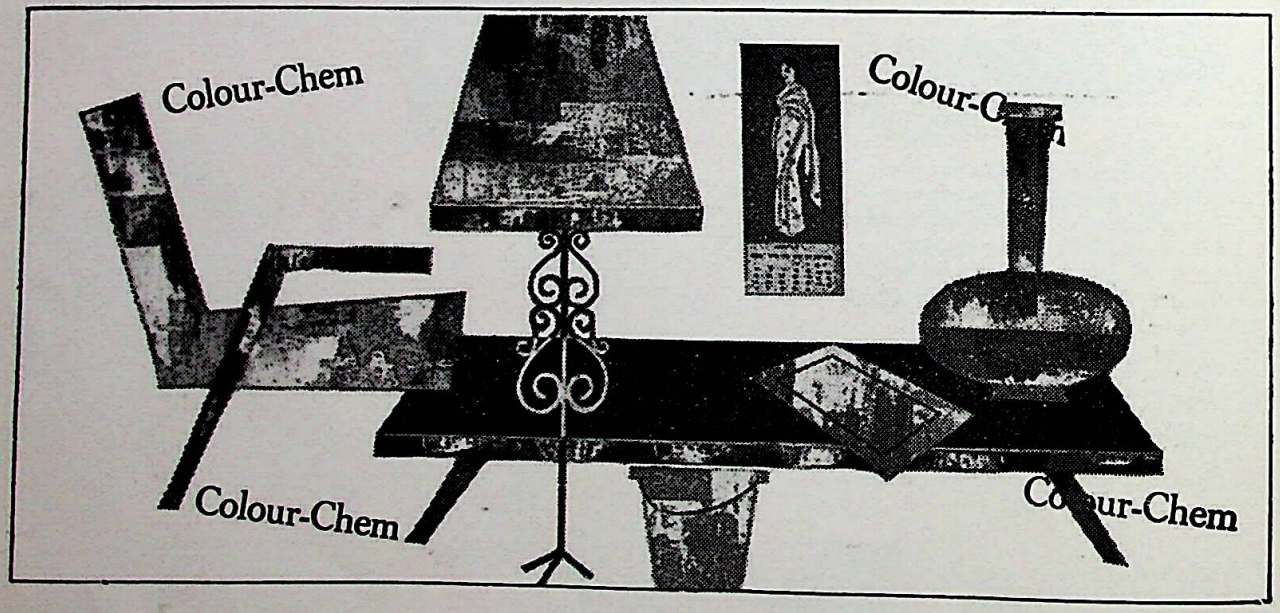

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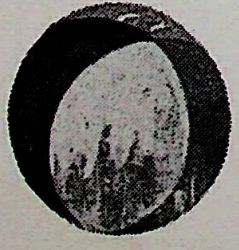

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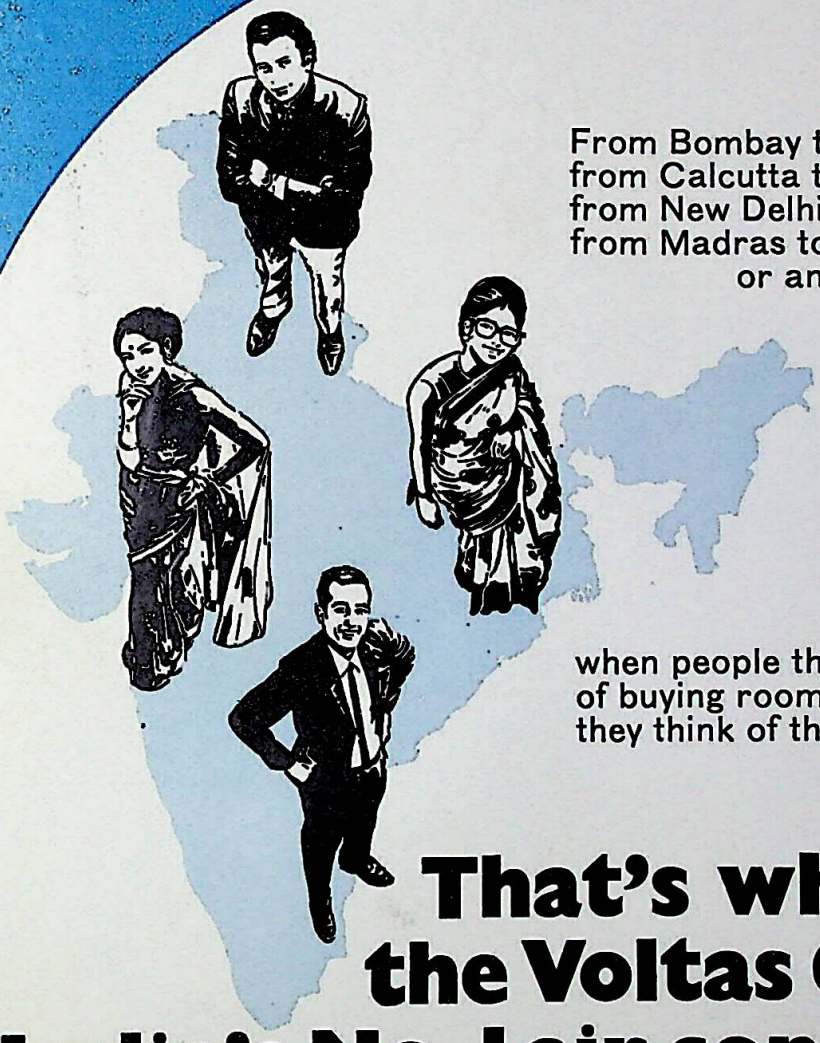

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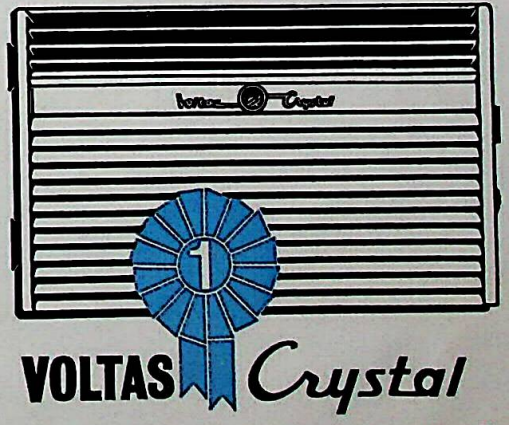

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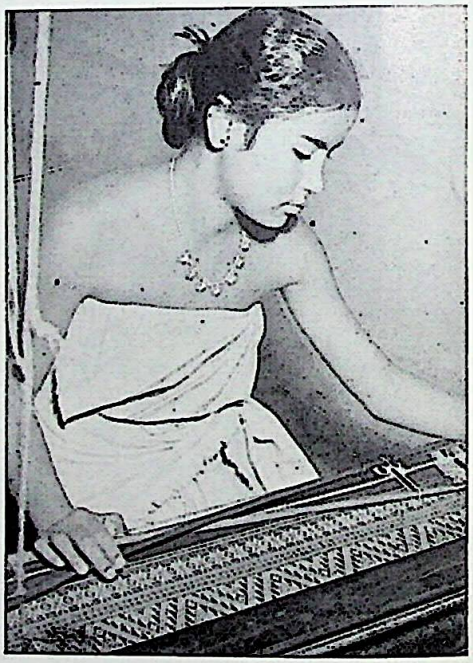

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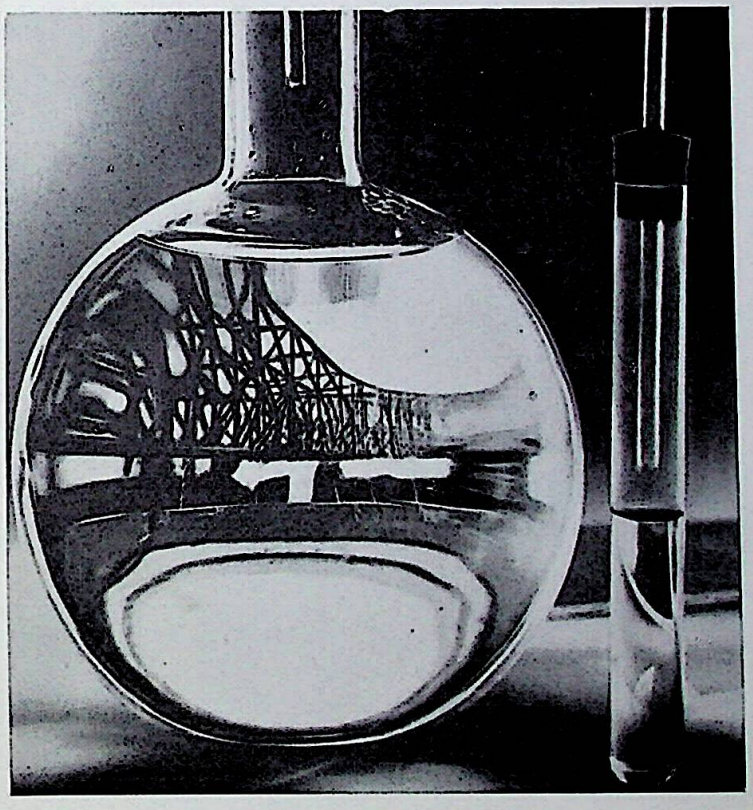

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